

OCTOBER ISSUES OF **BIG CARP** AND **FREE LINE** MAGAZINES FREE HERE

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Creedence Fishery Social by Chris French
Autumn Made UK 50 by Darren Lamey
Callum's Common by Andy Leather
Belgium by Russell Bedford
Another String To 'The Bow' by Max Cottis
My life in Fishing by Roy Brett
Joining the UK 50s Club by Tracy Khan
My First Doubles by Stewart Crowther
If it Ain't Broke... by Steve 'Apache' Cliff

A Previously Trodden Blackwater Path (Part 2) by George Loughlin
The First of Many by Adam Johnston
World Carp Masters 2016
A Father's Request by Mark Quinn
Prepare for Success by John Flewin
Horseshoe Dream Session by Justin Phillips
Urban Carping on Salford Quays by Daniel Scranage
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BIG CARP

Top Tens!

Top 10 Day Ticket Carp Fisheries

1	COTTINGTON
2	LINEAR
3	CHRISTCHURCH
4	OAK LAKES FISHERY
5	BLUEBELL LAKES
6	CATCH 22
7	SANDHURST
8	FRYERNING
9	FARLOWS LAKE
10	COOLE ACRES

Top 10 French Holiday Destinations

1	IKTUS
2	LAKE BOSSARD
3	ETANG 5
4	RIBIERE
5	ABBEY
6	LAC ROSE
7	LAKE HERITAGE
8	DREAM LAKES
9	FISHABIL
10	JONCHERY

Top 10 Bait Companies

1	DYNAMITE
2	NUTRABAITS
3	STICKY
4	MAINLINE
6	TARGET
5	CC MOORE
7	NASH
8	URBAN
9	DAVE MALLIN
10	OUTLAW

Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies (Terminal)

1	ESP
2	KORDA
3	SOLAR
4	JAG
5	FOX
6	THINKING ANGLERS
7	GARDNER
8	NASH
9	AVID
10	CARP ONLINE

Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies

1	DIAWA SPORTS
2	SHIMANO
3	REUBEN HEATON
4	FREE SPIRIT
5	FOX
6	TRAKKER
7	AQUA PRODUCTS
8	HARRISON
9	CENTURY
10	SONIK

Top 10 Carp Shops

1	JOHNSON ROSS
2	THE TACKLE BOX
3	YATELEY ANGLING CENTRE
4	ANGLING DIRECT NORWICH
5	POINDESTRES
6	KESWALLS
7	ANGLING DIRECT BIRMINGHAM
8	ANGLING DIRECT SIMPSONS
9	TACKLE UP
10	ANGLING DIRECT CHELMSFORD

Top 10 Iconic Carp Waters

1	YATELEY
2	SAVAY
3	REDMIRE
4	WRAYSBURY
5	FOX POOL
6	HORTON
7	CASSIEN
8	LINCH HILL
9	ROACH PIT
10	JOHNSONS RAILWAY



As voted by Big Carp readers!

Big Carp Magazine! *a history of excellence*

BC
ISSUE 327

AUTUMN EQUINOX ISSUE

**Darren Butler
– Yateley
South Lake
Remembered**

**Max Cottis
– Another
String To
‘The Bow’**

**Chris French – Creedence Fishery Social
Stewart Crowther – Old School Carping
Tracy Khan – Joining the UK 50s Club
Andy Leather – Callum’s Common
Darren Lamey – Autumn Made
Russel Bedford – Canal Monsters
Roy Brett – My life in Fishing
Steve Cliff – If it Ain’t Broke...**

Still the proper carp angler’s favourite read

Fishing Show Winter Carp 2023



BIG NEWS FOR ALL CARP ANGLERS!

**THE MOMENT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR IS FINALLY HERE!
WE ARE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE WINTER CARP
SHOW 2023 WEBSITE AND TICKET SALES ARE NOW LIVE!**

DECEMBER 2ND AND 3RD, 2023, AT SANDOWN PARK, ESHER.

Get your tickets NOW and take advantage of our LIMITED VIP tickets with a special gift....

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT AT THE WINTER CARP SHOW 2023?

INDUSTRY GIANTS:

Rub shoulders with the legends of the fishing world, as they share their wisdom, stories and secret techniques for reeling in the big ones.

MASSIVE LINE-UP OF EXHIBITORS:

Explore an extensive array of fishing gear, equipment and accessories from top-notch brands.

EXPERT TALKS & SHOWS:

Dive deep into the world of fishing with expert talks and captivating shows. Learn from the best in the business including the legend Ali Hamidi Angler himself.



**HURRY AND VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO GRAB YOUR TICKETS NOW:
WWW.THEWINTERCARPSHOW.CO.UK/BUY-TICKETS**

This show is an experience you won't want to miss, so spread the word, tell your fishing buddies, and let's make The Winter Carp Show 2023 an unforgettable angling adventure!



Autumn Equinox Issue

As the months roll around again in 2023 once again, we find ourselves at that all-important time in the carp angler's calendar, the Autumn Equinox, equal hours of light and dark, and the commencement of the shortening of daylight hours. There's no way around it friends, winter is on its way!

I love this time of the year and have always found it to be very productive. So, I am looking forward to some great articles from this period, once you guys get around to writing them up. In the meantime, I have a real mixture of articles in this month's Big Carp.

Let's start off this month with Chris French and his Creedence Fishery Social. We all love a social, none more so than me, a chance to catch up with the boys and catch a few wackers at the same time. Andy Leather, catches an absolute beast of a common in this month's issue, Callum's Common, and at only ounces under fifty pounds, it really is a sight to behold, one of the best-looking commons we have ever seen.

Darren Lamey features in our cover story this issue with a fish which more than made his Autumn complete.

Russell Bedford and his buddies started their carp fishing journeys like many of us, on the canals. Even early on they dreamt of those mighty Belgium carp which lived in their impressive canal system, it was only a matter of time before they planned their assault.

Tracy Khan is an accomplished angler with a portfolio of Big Carp which would make most of us green with envy. This is the story of her first UK fifty. Next up, the fishing life of Roy Brett. I had asked Roy to contribute to the Old School issue but when I read Roy's article it was more of a life history, so instead of waiting, I thought now would be a good time to share his life with the world. Stewart Crowther actually wrote for the Old School book, his piece struck a chord with me, so I thought I would share this too with our readers this month.

Darren Butler's piece this month is an extract from A History of Yateley, if you are looking for a good book to read this Christmas, look no further.

Big Carp Angler Max Cottis returns this month with more massive French monsters and Steve Cliff makes his debut with an absolute cracker.

I hope you have been enjoying our two free monthly carp magazines, Big Carp and Free Line, see them both here – www.freelinemagazine.com

Now I need your help! Filling two magazines each month means I need twice as many articles, some people say they want to write, but never do. If you have had a successful start back, we would love to hear your tale. There are no picture or word limits. Simply Email your article to info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk.

If you would like to join our FREE subscription list to be sent the mags as soon as they come out Email FREE SUBBY to info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk. WITHOUT YOUR INPUT THERE WILL BE NO MAGS!

Have a great Autumn friends, catch a monster and send us the story – be part of the UK's fantastic carp angling history!

Rob Maylin

PS We are doing some great ADVERTISING deals to help everyone through the pandemic, drop me a line at info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk if you would like to see the deals and our media information pack.

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Darren Lamey – 51lb 12oz



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SECRETS OF THE THAMES

Price
£29.95

Secrets of The Thames

By Rob Maylin and friends

The River Thames flows through southern England. It is the longest river entirely in England, with a total length of 215 miles (346km) and the second longest in the United Kingdom, after the River Severn. While it is best known for flowing through London, the river also flows alongside other towns and cities, including Oxford, Reading, Henley-on-Thames, and Windsor.

The river gives its name to three informal areas: the Thames Valley, a region of England around the river between Oxford and west London; the Thames Gateway; and the greatly overlapping Thames Estuary around the tidal Thames to the east of London and including the waterway itself. Thames Valley Police is a formal body that takes its name from the river, covering three counties.

In an alternative name, derived from its long tidal reach up to Teddington Lock in south west London, the lower reaches of the river are called the Tideway.

It rises at Thames Head in Gloucestershire, and flows into the North Sea

via the Thames Estuary. On its way, it passes through London, the country's capital, where the river is deep and navigable to ships; the Thames drains the whole of Greater London. Its tidal section, reaching up to Teddington Lock, includes most of its London stretch and has a rise and fall of 7 metres (23ft).

Along its course are 45 navigation locks with accompanying weirs. Its catchment area covers a large part of South Eastern and a small part of Western England and the river is fed by 38 named tributaries. The river contains over 80 islands. With its waters varying from freshwater to almost seawater, the Thames supports a variety of wildlife and has a number of adjoining Sites of Special Scientific Interest, with the largest being in the remaining parts of the North Kent Marshes and covering 5,449 hectares (13,460 acres).

By far and away the largest carp water in UK. Now sit back and enjoy just a few of its many secrets.



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ShockLeader

What's happening, where and when in the carp scene

Government grants house builders a charter to pollute

The government's plan to rip up the regulations to protect our rivers by weakening the requirements around nutrient neutrality is a victory for housebuilders but a disaster for the environment. The nutrient neutrality rules were put in place in 2017 and designed to reduce the impact of nutrients like phosphates and nitrates from damaging protected sites and polluting our rivers..

They meant local councils should not give the go-ahead to any new development that is projected to add to river nutrients, either through wastewater from new homes or runoff from building sites. Martin Salter, policy lead at the Angling Trust, said: "Politics is about choices and the government have chosen to side with the polluters rather than maintain vital protections for our beleaguered rivers and watercourses.

Of course, if they were actually serious about their pledge to be 'the greenest government ever' our woefully inadequate sewage treatment works would have already been



upgraded and would be more than capable of processing the additional flows from new housing schemes to a standard acceptable in a modern country." In making their announcement to weaken the protection of our rivers, the government has tried to mitigate the impact by offering millions in funding to farmers and housebuilders to invest in schemes to prevent pollution and improve the environment.

But, whereas strong regulations

place requirements on developers to comply with the law and are enforceable, this offer of funding is not guaranteed and, as the cost-of-living crisis continues, could easily be taken away in future.

This funding will come from the taxpayer and will allow housebuilders to avoid their responsibility and continue to make huge profits.

The polluter won't pay, we will. This change in government policy has come after intense lobbying from housebuilders who have used figures on the number of houses that they have not been able to build to seek to overturn the regulations.

But as the ENDS Report have reported, these numbers are rough estimates.

Even the House Builders Federation, who produced the numbers, admitted to the ENDS Report, "its numbers are estimations, and that to ascertain more accurate figures would be very time consuming." Stuart Singleton-White, Head of Campaigns at the Angling Trust, said: "The housebuilders have come up with a figure on the back of a fag packet and the government has accepted it as gospel. This is no way to make policy changes.

This government promised us in May, June, and July that they would not lower environmental protections.

Now they have done exactly that." According to Green Agri Land Ltd, a nutrient mitigation company who works with housebuilders, plans are already in place to mitigate pollution for approximately 70,000 homes. Singleton-White added: "This shows the regulations were not too onerous but were working, and housebuilders were responding by taking measures to tackle the pollution impacts of their developments.

This poorly thought out 'charter to pollute' announcement will sweep away the progress being made." ■





Welcome to your Members Newsletter

Welcome to the latest issue of the Angling Trust & Fish Legal Members Newsletter. Today we report on the launch of our annual Christmas Raffle which raises vital funds to support our work to protect fish, fishing and the environment; how sea angling can benefit from an £18m fund; our latest trade associate partner Zerofit who have a special offer for members; the fantastic film we have produced of this year's RiverFest final on the Trent; and loads more! Tight lines! John Cheyne, Marketing, Communications & Membership Manager:



Bid for a chance to win a day's fishing at the world famous Broadlands fishery



How would you fancy a day fishing for grayling on the world renowned Broadlands fishery? Due to a generous donation from Chalkstream Fishing Ltd, we are able to offer tickets for 10 lucky winners to chase 'The Lady of the Stream' on Thursday, 26th October. All money raised will support our vital work to protect fish and fishing.

The 10 highest bidders will be joined at Broadlands by Welsh international angler Hywel Morgan and flyfishing legend Charles Jardine, alongside the Angling Trust's Jamie Cook and Martin Salter. Closing date for bids is Sunday, 17th September, at 8pm.

Bahamas fly fishing prize to benefit Fish Legal

To celebrate the Orvis Saltwater Fly Fishing Festival and to support the vital work Fish Legal do to protect waterways, Orvis UK is delighted to have partnered with Go Fishing Worldwide to offer an unmissable experience, whilst raising money for Fish Legal.

Go Fishing has donated a place on its Flat's Fly Fishing School, which is running on Crooked Island in the Bahamas from the 10th – 18th November 2023. The value of this tremendous prize is £3,400 – with just 50 tickets available at £50 each, don't miss out.

T&C: The winning entrant would need to cover the cost of their flights, and the prize would be non-transferable and valid for this year only, so entrants would need to check they can make the dates. A condition of buying a ticket means you are happy to be signed up to the Go Fishing Worldwide and Orvis UK mailing lists.



Clock is ticking on agricultural pollution promise

In 2015, Fish Legal, WWF UK and the Angling Trust took the government to court for failing to do more to tackle chronic agricultural pollution of protected rivers, lakes, and wetlands.

The government promised in court to produce Diffuse Water Pollution Plans for 37 sites 'as soon as reasonably practicable'. These plans, they said, were a necessary first step before deciding whether a Water Protection Zone was needed to end agricultural diffuse pollution and for those sites to reach favourable conservation status.

Nearly eight years later, only six of the 37 pollution plans have been produced. Fish Legal are keeping watch on how long ago that binding promise was made in court and will continue the fight for cleaner waters.

ANGLERS AGAINST POLLUTION

Awards for Water Quality Monitoring volunteers



The Angling Trust marked the first anniversary of the national roll out of the Water Quality Monitoring Network project by presenting special awards for the exceptional contributions made by anglers, clubs and partners. Congratulations to the Girling Angling Society, Glyn Marshall, Ian Tucker and the North Wales Rivers Trust!

MARINE

Failure to recognise importance of flatfish

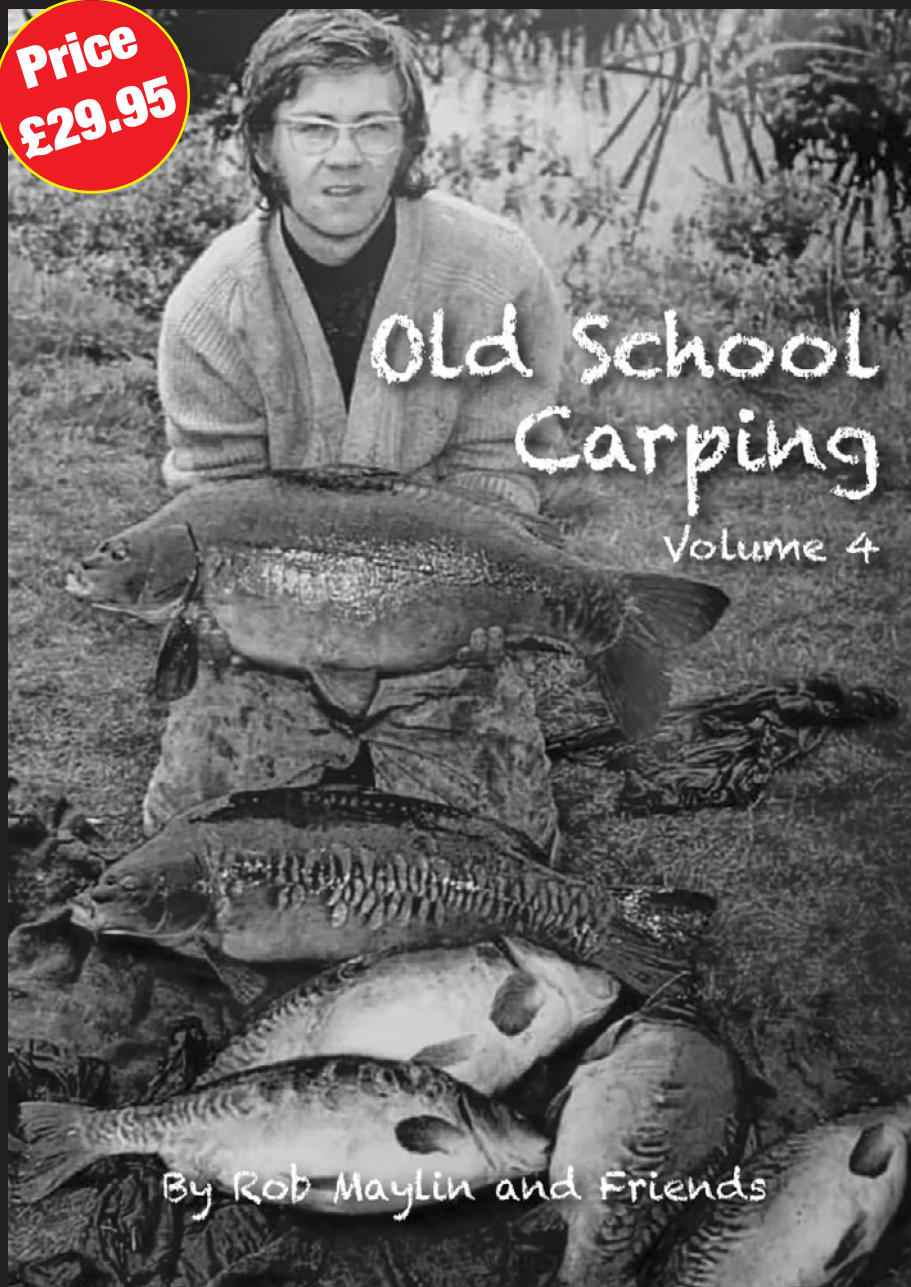


The Angling Trust is disappointed at the failure to recognise recreationally important flatfish within the Southern North Sea & Eastern Channel Flatfish Fishery Management Plan. Defra undervalue the importance of recreational species like plaice, flounder, dab and turbot in its draft plan which does not go far enough to reverse the damage caused by commercial over-fishing, particularly the high discards incurred in this fishery.

We will be publishing our response to the consultation in due course and encourage all recreational sea anglers with views to respond.

OLD SCHOOL CARPING VOLUME 4

Price
£29.95



The 'Old School' series has become one of our most popular sets of books we have ever published. It appears that, in this fast-moving society we find ourselves, more and more anglers are keen to look back at how things used to be, where it all started, before the commercialism that now controls our angling, before the 'sponsored angler', before Facebook, the Internet, or even mobile phones! However, did we survive? It certainly was a very different sort of carp angling to today's high pace, remote control, Snapchatting, wannabe blogger's world we find ourselves in.

Our contributors to volume 4 are the unsung heroes of that bygone age who were catching carp years ago before the hair rig when not everyone could catch them quite so easily.

But the big difference between the line-up for this volume is that these anglers' names may not be known to you. Unlike our previous volumes this one is not all about the famous anglers of this time. Volume 4 is about many of the very successful anglers who did not seek fame by publicising their catches at the time.

Anglers who smashed their venues and the record books but kept quiet until

now. So, let's take a look at what Volume 4 has to offer, and why I consider it the best yet. Here is a brief synopsis of volume 4's line up and what their chapters are about. A Brief Moment in Time by Kevin Grozier, My Early Carp Life by Anthony Rogers, A Tale of Two Twenties by Dave Miller, Back to the Old Days by William Lovett, Blackroot Pool by Brian Ingram, The Old School Scrapbook, The Seventies by Christopher Davis, Yateley North Lake June 1985 by Nick Peat, Early Carping Memories of Broadwater by Phil Martyn, The Tale of a Twenty Pounder (My first) by Steven Hall, Looking Back – Old School by Steve Fisher, Early Seventies Carping by Gerry Giles, My Introduction to Carp Fishing by Lee Fisher, Billingsgate in Focus by Kris Ford, Old Skool Carping by Paul Tidiman, 'Billy' the Mirror, Church Pool, Patshull by Tim Thornton and My First Doubles by Stewart Crowther.

A fantastic, 'one off' collection of tales from a bygone age from many of the most successful but most secretive anglers of the good old days.

Order your copy now, only 500 copies produced, so be quick!

Available Here - <http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk/buy-books.html>

See you at the Pike Anglers Club Convention



The Angling Trust will have a stand at this year's Pike Anglers Club Convention on Saturday, 23rd September. It's being held at the Lady Eastwood Centre, Newark Showground, Nottinghamshire and includes guest speakers, second-hand stalls, coaching sessions and trade stands. If you're going to the Convention – pop along to our stand and say hello!



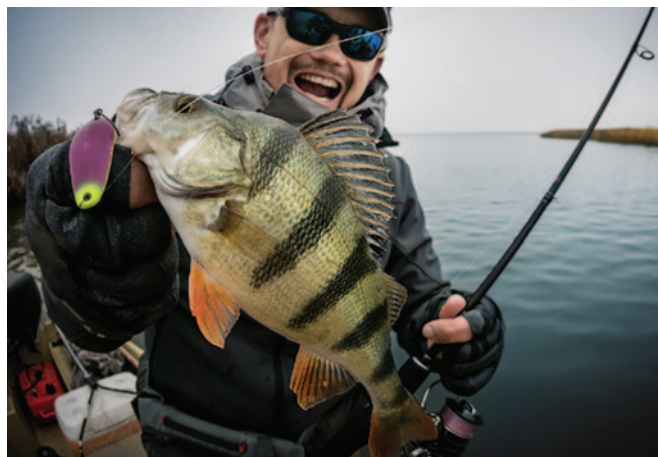
Local lads win international grueller on the Gloucester

Team Gloucester have been crowned the 2023 Angling Trust Feeder National champions after a tough test on their local Gloucester Canal. There were 29 teams of five anglers taking part in this international-style feeder-only competition where the winners earned an invite to the FIPS World Club Feeder Championships in Portugal early next year.

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MEMBER OFFER

Lure fishing this autumn?
Get 10% off at
PredatorTackle



Our friends at PredatorTackle offer 10% discount on all online sales – just one of the great benefits you receive as an Angling Trust Individual Member, including savings on tackle, bait, fishing books, holidays, travel, household goods – and more!

COMPETITIONS



Brilliant Barnsley land a double and place at World Club Champs

The unstoppable Drennan Barnsley Blacks made it a weekend to remember on the Gloucester Canal by winning the Angling Trust Float National just a day after claiming the Division 1 National title. The victory secures them a guaranteed invite to the FIPS World Club Championships in Slovenia next Summer.

VACANCIES

Non-Executive Directors

The Angling Trust has three vacancies available for Non-Executive Directors, of which two are general roles and one which will become the Welfare and Safety Lead Director when the current incumbent reaches the end of their tenure in early 2024. As these roles are elected by the subscribing membership, you will also need to provide the following: a short (300 words) biography; your Angling Trust membership number; and a nomination from an Angling Trust member. No salaries are attached to these roles but legitimate and reasonable out of pocket expenses will be paid. The deadline for applications is Monday, 11th September.

Environment Communications Officer

We are seeking an enthusiastic and hard-working individual to join the Angling Trust supporting our environment team. The role will help to develop and lead on the production of communications to promote the environmental and campaign work of the Angling Trust and engagement in our 'Love Fishing Love Nature' campaign.

Campione, campione olé olé ole...



Big congratulations to Ashley Izzard and Tony Reynolds on an amazing result winning the BCAC 2024 final at Broadlands Lake with a whopping 566lb 2oz. We reached out to the NEW Champions and this is what Ashley had to say: "What happened this weekend I still cannot believe it!! What Dreams are Made Of we did it!! Friday morning the draw was very kind to us with a out the bag draw in place I went up and picked a mega peg the same peg as we were in last year, we got set up and went to work. Straight from the off we were ahead and that's where we were at the end landing 33 fish for a total of 566lb 2oz ahead of the field by 350lbs. It's crazy but it happened and God does it feels mega so much hard work, dedication, and passion has gone in to trying to achieve what we have done this weekend for a very long time!! Hybrid pop ups and spicy crab pop ups as the hook bait on the surface and the mixers soaked in hemp and salmon oil in the day time and the night time was pop ups over cell Boillies kept the bites coming to win. Wow, we did it!" Well done, Lads, you smashed it. ■

Last-Minute Fishing Stays in the UK for Autumn: From Cottages Where You Can Fish From Your Garden to Lodges That Are Only Accessible by Boat

Searches for 'fishing holiday' have increased by nearly 60% in the UK between September 2022 and August 2023, according to search engine data.

Similarly, there has been an over 100% rise in searches for 'fishing cottages' during the same period, illustrating that many keen anglers and fishers have been on the lookout for a fishing getaway to bring in their next catch.

And given that the approaching autumn season holds many opportunities across the UK to cast your line into peaceful lakes, meandering rivers, and bountiful seafront locations around the country, those on the lookout for their next fishing retreat should consider planning a trip in the near future.

This is why Independent Cottages, a specialist UK holiday provider, has revealed a selection of its fishing-friendly properties around the country with last-minute availability for those looking to treat themselves to a fishing break before winter rolls around.

From homes where you can fish from your own garden to cottages so secluded that they are only accessible by boat, you can treat yourself to a spontaneous getaway to fish to your heart's content.

A Waterside Stay Where You Can Fish From Your Own Back Garden – Norfolk Anchor Cottage is in a prime position overlooking the River Bure in the heart of the Norfolk Broads.

It is only a 2-minute walk from Wroxham Village Centre, which is considered to be part of the 'capital of the Broads' that is particularly popular amongst boating holiday fanatics.

The property can sleep up to eight guests across four bedrooms, with a 20% discount available on groups of four or less, within its cosy confines.

Highlights of the property include its waterside patio gardens where guests can dine alfresco, watch the local boats float by, and even cast their line! Private mooring is also available for boats, which you can bring yourself or hire locally, should you wish to explore the surrounding local waterways during your stay and fish a little further afield.

And with plenty of waterside pubs and restaurants a mere few minutes from the property, this is a perfect



Anchor Cottage, Norfolk.

retreat for those who can't resist a getaway set on the UK's beautiful waterways.

Anchor Cottage has select availability this September and for the majority of October, starting from £101 per night during off-peak season and from £309 per night during peak season, both with a 3-night minimum stay required.

You can find further information here > https://www.independentcottages.co.uk/norfolk_broads/anchor-cottage-ref941 A Cornish Country Retreat With 17 Acres of Private Grounds To Fish In – Cornwall Sleeping up to six guests across three bedrooms, Owl Lodge is nestled in the tranquil countryside of South Cornwall, near the idyllic village of Two Waters Foot, on Rivermead Farm.

From the property, guests can soak in sprawling river and valley views of the English countryside landscape, and escape from the bustle and stress of daily life.

Owl Lodge boasts 17 private acres of grounds which guests can explore at their leisure during their stay.

It includes beautiful meadows, peaceful woodland, its own lake, and a stretch of the River Fowey which has fishing rights for guests to fish with no restraints during their stay. The property's prime location in South Cornwall also means that guests are never far from some of the county's most sought-after sights, including the beaches of Fowey,

Polperro, and the magnificent South West Coastal Path. Along the coast, mackerel fishing is also a popular activity, and visitors can take boat trips locally to savour some sea-based fishing during their stay too.

Owl Lodge has remaining availability in the latter part of September and throughout October, with short breaks starting from just £200 per night in the off-peak season (with a 3-night minimum stay required) and 7-night stays from £750 year-round.

Further details can be found here > <https://www.independentcottages.co.uk/cornwall/owl-lodge-ref5549> A Romantic Getaway for Two By The River – The Lake District Once a working farm, Ellen Hall is the home of seven romantic retreats including Dyke's Cottage, which can host two guests in one bedroom in its quiet spot in the Northern Lakes.

The property is beautifully presented with its own galleried mezzanine area, a four-poster bed in its bedroom, and a cosy log-burning fireplace.

For a getaway where fishing is available on-site, guests can stay in this charming cottage in a quiet spot in the vale close to the River Ellen.

And within easy reach of the Northern Lakes, there are ample areas where visitors can fish for free as they explore the wider region during days out.

The babbling brook through the farm's garden runs beside the cot-

tage, and paired with the sound of birdsong this creates a relaxing atmosphere for couples to spend time in when they're not out fishing. They can also make the most of the on-site hydrotherapy hot tub, which is ideal for soothing any aches and pains after a long day casting your line.

Short breaks are available from £110 per night during off-peak season (with a 2-night minimum stay required) and from £96 per night in peak season (with a 4-night minimum stay required). 7-night stays are also available from £350 and Dyke's Cottage has last-minute availability throughout September and October.

Further information can be found here > https://www.independentcottages.co.uk/lake_district/dykes-cottage-ref2791 A Waterfront Lake House in the UK's Largest Marl Lake System – The Cotswolds The Green Woodpecker Lodge has a New England style has been renovated in recent years and designed in a contemporary fashion situated in the idyllic Cotswold region of England.

Here, up to six guests can be accommodated across three bedrooms, where groups of friends or family can enjoy a long fishing retreat in good company.

This picturesque lake house can be found in the Cotswolds Water Park, the UK's largest marl lake system, where visitors can spend hours of endless fun in the water.

The property faces Isis Lake, offering beautiful lakeside views through-



Owl Lodge, Cornwall.

out the stay. Fishing for carp is a very popular local activity in the water park's 150 lakes set within a huge 40-square-mile nature reserve.

The protected area is also popular amongst nature lovers, with many bird species thriving within its confines, as well as watersports enthusiasts, with kayaking, paddleboarding, and sailing all available nearby.

Green Woodpecker Lodge has remaining availability throughout September and October with short break prices starting from £150 per night during off-peak season and £250 per night during peak season (both of which require a 3-night minimum stay).

7-night stays are also available starting from £1200. Further details

are here > <https://www.independentcottages.co.uk/cotswolds/green-woodpecker-lodge-ref5253> A Get-away in the Scottish Wilderness So Secluded it is Reached by Private Boat – The Scottish Highlands For those seeking a fishing break in total isolation, Laggan, situated in the secluded Scottish Highlands, is surrounded by nothing but wilderness and beautiful wildlife.

In fact, the property is so secluded that it is only readily accessible by boat, which guests have sole use of for the duration of their stay.

With no mobile phone signal, no neighbours, and no electricity, this is the total off-grid holiday experience for those who want nothing more than to connect with nature and enjoy some of the most peaceful fishing spots that the country has to offer.

Expect cooking hand-picked mussels which you've foraged from the nearby beach by hand to have for dinner, building a fire from local driftwood, and of course finding a local catch to cook up alongside for a true taste of the Highlands from the nearby seafront. Despite its popularity, Laggan has last-minute availability this October, with the majority of the month being bookable for guests.

Laggan offers 7-night stays which cost from £1050 year round.

You can find further information about the property here > <https://www.independentcottages.co.uk/highland/laggan-ref3136> Independent Cottages offers a range of last-minute UK getaways on their website with fishing available on-site.

More information can be found here > <https://www.independentcottages.co.uk/cottageSearch.php#top-of-results>. ■



Green Woodpecker Lodge, Cotswolds.

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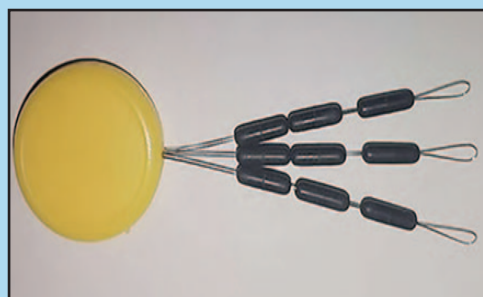
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A few nice fish for team member Tim Thornton from Durleigh res over the last couple of days. Size 4 Scorpion Crank hook in an IQ2 D rigs with DNA baits Bug, SLK, and S7 doing the business. Well done Tim.



This is what we love to see, smiles all round, #moretackleboxlessxbox team member Jo Sargent-Cain out making memories: "It not about the weight but the memories created! Utilising the scorpion Choddy and Curve shank hooks, composite lead clips and micro ring swivels" Well done guys,

Team member Gary Wadsworth took his son recently and bagged this ghosty PB, congratulations! "Thumbs up from the lad for the size 4 scorpion curve shank hooks, braided hooklink and end tackle. All of which landed him 10 fish with this ghostie being his favourite and new PB."

Owner Mark Russell just Landed this banging 23lb common: "I thought my chances had gone as bite time is normally overnight, I fell back to sleep after waking at 7am. At 8:30 my middle rod screamed a tone I hadn't heard for an age! Having to fish with the rod tips up my rod came out of the butt rest, and the reel hit the alarm the take was so hard. It stripped line and took me a few minutes to slow and turn it around. After a hard fight the lead had come off making it a bit easier to clear the weed, I slipped the net under my first Ecton Lakes Clover common and one that hasn't been caught for 5 years! I used our Scorpion Wide Gape hooks in size 4, micro ring swivel, Tungsten Kickers, Hook Bead and our new CTO Pro hooklink in 25lb B/S. Having my daughter with me on her first night made it even more special, oh and it's me wedding anniversary too." Well in Mark.



Team member John Paul McCusker is back out again at Monks Pit and back doing what he does best, catching stunning carp.



Our man, Bruce McCarlie, with some very special catches! Bruce used a variety of our terminal tackle items including the Scorpion Wide Gape and Curved hooks, Tungsten Putty and 2mm Shrink Tubing. We'll done @bruce_mccarlie_angler some scaley bangers there!

Our monthly reviews on products currently on the market

In this issue:

- Nite Watches



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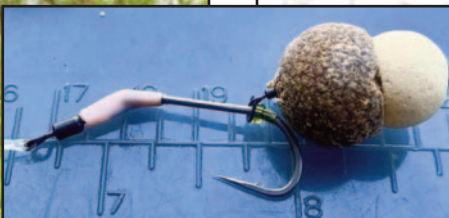


Senderos



A few recent captures from South Yorkshire for Peter Conn

Managed a few decent ones from a couple of places in and around Sheffield. Using the new Trakker terminal range to make my Ronnie rigs. A size 6 cinga BP nailing them. Over carpparticlesuk hemp and the ever faithful asbo from madbaits.



The Wheel Of Good Fortune

When could a flat barrow tyre lead to the capture of the largest fish in a lake? Here's when... After Richard Armistead had turned up to Knotford following a day at work, he discovered his barrow tyre was flat! Knowing couldn't physically carry his gear round to a swim by hand, he decided to select a swim that he could park behind. Half an hour of leading about later, the 55-year-old from Leeds had found a clear-ish spot at 80 yards, where he decided he would fish all three rods over a 4kg mixture of 12mm Bug boilies, hemp and corn, all smothered in Bug Hydro Spod Syrup. At 7 o'clock that evening, one of the rods burst into life and following a 10-minute fight, the largest fish in the lake was in the bottom of Rich's net. Despite being down in weight after spawning, it was still a new personal best for Rich at 46lb. The successful presentation was a Bug EVO hookbait tipped with a white Bug Half Tones pop-up on a snowman rig.





Alan Smith catch report

Alan Smith with the 50+ year old 'Big Linear' from The Woolpack. The one Alan desperately wanted to catch, she weighed 44lb. Caught on one of our S2 crushed cork pop ups, fished over Creamino freezer baits. Well done Alan, what a truly beautiful old carp.



Benn Oconnor catch report

NEW LAKE RECORD AT JOHNSLAND. 41lb 12oz What a cracking carp on a family fishing adventure with faye, ginge, Charlie and carp dog ted, can't believe it what a venue, TNT 15ml wafers fished over 30 TNT boilies and some 4ml steamies pellets was enough for a new lake record, fished to the far margin along with 3oz square lead to hold on the slopes, right result guys.



Roy Furgusen catch report

Well, she definitely made me wait for it this one, turning up with 24hrs left to go, 40lb 8oz of big fish Thursday woodcarving common carp.



Liam Morgan catch report

Friday mornings don't get much better than that! The long Sutton at 49.8lb! New pb and backed up with a couple of 30s.





Ben Steger catch report

Like busses! I can't quite believe I'm typing this, but almost exactly a month ago I had my first UK 40. Well, this morning I managed another and a new PB! Jumping on my syndicate for an overnighter I managed three carp, with this one, 'The Parrot' at 42lb 12ozs. Unbelievable!!



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Bradley Wagner catch report

Going through some photos and came across this one I've never shared on here, a true UK giant at over 50lbs, gets me wanting to go hunting for bigguns again. After heavily baiting a margin spot over the course of weeks, the bite times became predictable, so ensuring the traps were set ready, the pieces of the jigsaw soon came together!



Chris Marler catch report

A superb 50lb-plus from Oak.



Jack Thompson catch report

Jack Thompson catch report – London's Finest
What a week on the rivers, hope you all managed a couple. The city adventures can be such hard work sometimes, but it's fish like these that keep me returning again and again. I can't believe in September I finally caught a very special fish from the river at over 31lb which took me years and now I've beaten my PB again but from a different stretch altogether, What a fish of a lifetime and such a unique one to have in my album.



Cliff Palmer catch report

Frimley charity event. Cliff Palmer. 54lb 4oz Charlie's Mate.





Adam Honeysett catch report

Last week see me get out on the bank for our annual get together down on Elphicks North Lake, which went well to say the least, I came 4th in the draw and opted for the shallows due to the weather for the coming week, fortunately I found a spot which they wanted to feed on from the start notching up 33 bites with 33 fish landed, with 26 fish coming to 1 rod. I got through 20 kilos of Midland Mixes Party Mix, 20 Kilos of Keybaitsolutions ASM Boilies as well as 5 kilos of the matching pellet. Biggest went 51.02, I also had 4 x 40's to 46.12, 12 x 30's, a giant 40+ grass carp which I didn't dare get out the water in fear of it hurting me or itself, the rest were 20's from 20.04 to 29+. I had 5 off the top to 46.12 the rest off the bottom. I fished 2 rods after the 1st 48hrs to let them keep coming through with no lines getting in the way. All caught on camera to go on my YouTube channel in the near future, here's a few of them.



Nigel Sharp catch report

I do like a big common and some big commons do seem to like me where as others don't and I have to work for them. Oh well we'll get there in the end and it's all part of the journey eh. This old mate went 46.12 a month or so ago and so far, it's the best of 19 fish in as many nights this spring. Many thanks to Eddy Hampton Hagar the bailiff for his help and @lust_for_carp_life for taking a few epic snaps.

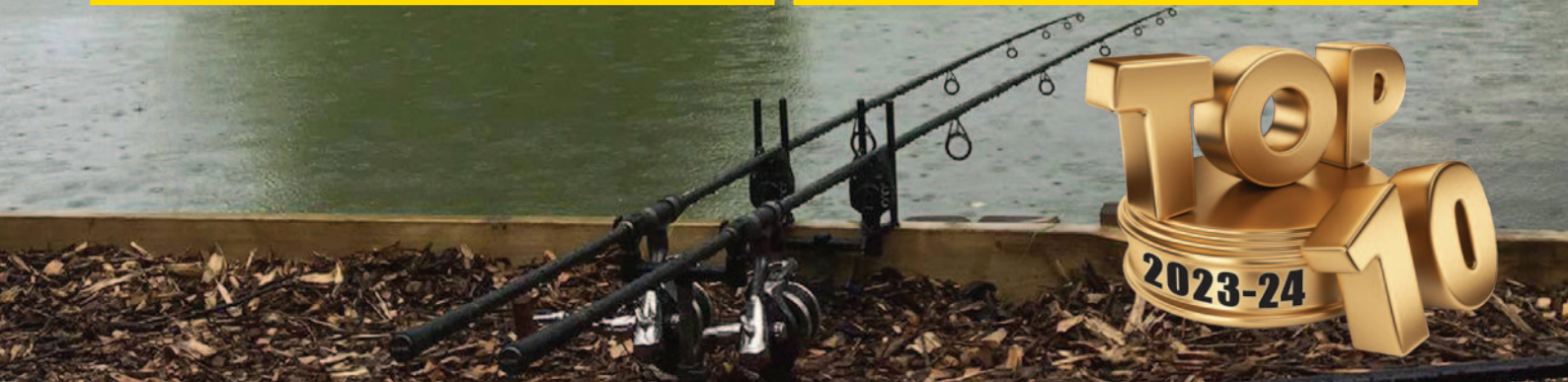


Tom Maker catch report

Hardwick 40. I haven't fished on Hardwick/smiths nowhere near as much as what I have done on the other linear day ticket waters, and having had 40s from all the others I only needed Hardwick to complete the set.....but never in my wildest dreams did I expect to catch it filming the debut episode for CineCarp TV, up until that point the session had been off the charts with multiple carp and some other bigguns too, but with a slight change in hookbait and one last cast onto a small baited area I was soon bent double into Hardwick and smiths largest resident. Mission accomplished. To watch the full film head on over to <https://www.cinecarp.tv>

BIG CARP TOP TEN

Carp Fisheries



Web: cottingtonlakes.co.uk
Email: cottingtonlakes@outlook.com
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Dave Ilsley catch report

Furzebray Carp Lakes New Complex Record! Well, I didn't expect that yesterday evening Dave Ilsley with the mighty Dropscale at a staggering 48lb 14oz! Well done mate so pleased for you.



Jason Blake catch report

Sick carp, sick backdrop. Jason Blake tripping up the biggest in the stretch using a Duo-Fleck and Tint-Link Combi rig fished to an area he baited heavily with boilie.



John Flewin – Black Eye

Sat here still buzzing – The awesome Black Eye at 44.11 from the incredible Farriers. Such and insane beast and my 3rd 40 of the year. over the moon with this session with 6 banked in first 24 hours. Trusty portaloos pinks over UltraNut, pellet and popcorn maize...all soaked in Nutmino. TTT wide gapes with flurolink as combi slip D rigs. Huge thanks to Ethan Thomas and Melvin Batt for their help.



Jason Galton catch report

Burners Hall Fishery NEW LAKE RECORD! Jason Galton opted to fish a 48-hour session this weekend, and what a weekend it was! We are still yet to find out how he finished up his session, however he managed to land Grumpy at a new lake record weight of 52lb 2oz... on the first day! A huge congratulations Jason and Top Angling! It has certainly been a weekend packed full of big fish this weekend, with no fewer than 6 fish over 40lb since Friday... just from the catch reports we know of so far. 40lb since Friday... just from the catch reports we know of so far!



Jay Curry catch report

Jay Curry has been having some exceptional results testing the new Fishmeal boilies recently. The West Sussex carper has banked some lovely commons to 46lb whilst testing the new bait, one that's going down a storm with many testers. Well done, Jay.



John Hill catch report

Angel on the Shrimp. John Hill recently caught one of the finest commons on the complex in the shape of Angel at over 43lb. The car park lake at Irchester is notoriously tricky and can really do you over. What makes this capture even more special is that word on the street, the carp after a decade have stopped eating our beloved shrimp. Clearly Angel didn't get the memo. Good angling buddy the most wanted ain't far away.



Darren Ward Catch Report

'Fish on Friday', blood sweat and pain before the bank of Wraysbury two finally paid me out with a new lake record common. I was in the drive-in swim up by Wraysbury train station sat in the back of my van when I had a take from a spot close up against the island and lost it within thirty seconds when the hook pulled which left me with a back case of selective tourettes syndrome! As I rowed out to the spot to replace the bait I saw 3 carp scoot of my spot and felt id blown my chance as these fish were very spooky with people. But I needed of worried because within the hour I was away again and landed myself a mid-twenty stockie which I had to jump in the lake to land it. I sacked the fish up and was in the back of my van, stark bullock naked in the process of changing my clothes when my buzzer let out its battle cry and I had no choice but to jump out my van bald bollock naked and do battle in darkness with an unseen monster that gave me the run around and fought me to a standstill after a lengthy 25 minute battle. The naked common in all her glory.



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Creedence Fishery Social

By Chris French

Creedence fishery was the venue for our social. myself and 3 friends who met many moons ago fishing the wasing syndicate have always remained in touch and try to fish together when we can.

Life moves along faster than most people can keep up with and with all

4 of us becoming dads, finding a suitable date was proving impossible, we settled on creedence fishery as our venue, a slightly different approach to our normal style of fishing. Each swim has its own cabin with tv, heaters, fridges and on site shower with toilet facilities.

Upon arrival we were picked up with all of our gear and taken to the creedence caravan (HQ) jacko gave

us a warm welcome and ran through the awesome set up he has in place. We drew for our swims and again was dropped off at our swims.

My initial thoughts were, what an amazing place.... In a busy east London location it was somehow tranquil and peaceful. I found myself in peg 3 (the double).

As I stepped out of the carp wagon at the top of my swim, I had a huge









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bbq area, seating and a huge umbrella to protect you from the elements. What a touch! Making my way down the steps towards the lake, the cabin was surrounded by bark chip-pings, keeping everything clean and mud free!

Whilst loading my gear into the cabin and keeping a close eye on the lake, I was eager to get cracking... that being said once I had the bed chair in and my food and drinks in the fridge, I got a rod prepped ready for dispatch.

It's a bait boat only rule on this lake and whilst it's not everybody's cup of tea it was nice to have a change from the norm so to speak. After seeing what looked like a good fish show I had to get a rod on that area asap! Ronnie rigs from assassin tackle were

armed and a good helping of urban baits red spicy fish boilies mixed with tuna and garlic boilies were crumbed and chopped into a bucket before adding some matching pellet and liquid attraction, topped off with some house pellet and maize that the fish are fed on at the fishery! The boat was in the water and rig was on its way out.... Again BOSH HHHH no more than 10ft away from the boats debut voyage, after dropping the rig and getting the line sorted, the bobbin was on and it was back to the cabin to sort the gear out properly.

My original plan was to watch the lake and get the rods out just before dark giving myself a good amount of time to watch for any signs to position my rigs in areas were fish were either feeding or holding up. So with

that in mind I just fished the one rod initially.

I was doubled up with my very good friend Sam Neville, we have known each other since junior school and it was him that really got me into fishing. His dad phil, would take us to various lakes early hours of the morning at weekends when we were at school and shed the wealth of knowledge he has accrued over his years of angling. As you do.... Reminiscing about our childhood, and more recently our kids! In deep conversation the sound of the alarm startled me at first as it was no more than 2 hours after being out I was in!!!!

Everyone says it but it felt like a good fish, the owner warned us about the fight in these fish... he wasn't wrong in his own words (these fish





are violent) with the lake being around 6-8ft all over with no real features my biggest worry was keeping it away from the snags and reed lines margins!

After a while the fish tired and finally drifted into the net! To be honest I don't think it really sunk in at the time but it was BIG.... I shouted across to Dan and glasses who were fishing the cabins on the other side, "bring the camera" it's a chunk.

On closer inspection and a few reference pictures, it was confirmed "Mozzas fish" 35.8lbs of pure scaley happiness. What a buzz!!

Pictures done and the fish treated and returned I set about getting all my rods ready for the night ahead. Sadly for me it was a un eventful night, the lads on the other side how ever managed to bank a few between them.

Having the one so early on had me second guessing myself, am I on the right spots? Have I put enough bait out? Are my rigs the right choice? Have i blown the spot with that fish?

I went into the second night the same as the first, I baited heavily this time though, 1.5kg over each rod to

ensure there would be enough bait left for a bite even if the smaller fish moved in on me.

2:30am and I was in again, a crackling 18lbs fully scaled, no sooner than the fish was back and my rod back out, sam was in. Another one of creedence scaley mirrors! With Dan and glasses also catching.

Breakfast was served before we knew it and the rod i sent towards an aerator was off, absolutely stunning 28.4 mirror that normally pushes the 31lbs mark was my rewards. But when they look

Like that size is irrelevant! Cliche I know! Again the pictures were done and fish returned to its stomping ground.

It was early afternoon now and the weather was on one! Rain hammered down all afternoon and drawing into the evening. It was our last night and I went with a go big or go home approach, fresh rigs tied and my ever faithful Specialized hookbaits GPB1 pop ups put to work, all rods were out for 6pm! A good few beers and enough food to feed an army, i was quietly confident of another bite or 2!

Sure enough at around 4am my rod

was twitching like a dodgy lightbulb. A 22 lbs common with a missing pectoral fin (nemo) was sulking in the net! Fortunately glasses was also awake as he had had a fish moments before me! What a great ending to a great trip....

It wasn't over yet though, Sam and Dan also managing to get a bite early morning just as London came to life for the week, it was Monday morning and people were making their way to work. It was time for us to start packing up and head home.

20 bites between 4 of us

16 landed and a couple of 30s for good measure! If you're looking for a social with friends or family, creedence fishery is well worth a shout! So good we're going back in October!

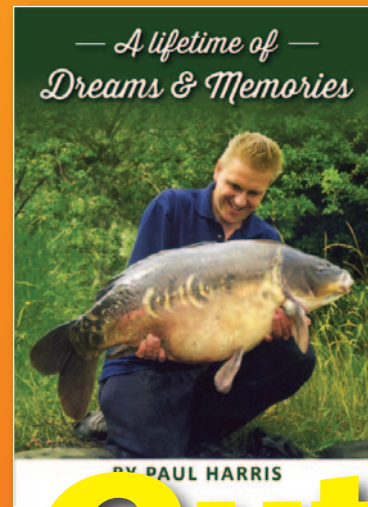
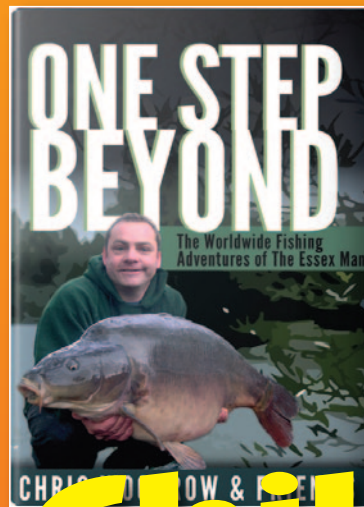
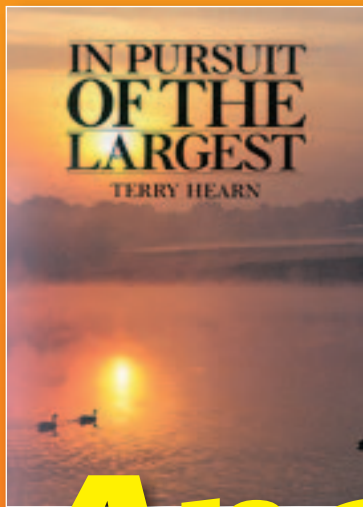
Big thanks to Jacko and his team for an incredible 3 nights. Can't recommend the place enough.

Lastly thanks to the lads, Dan, glasses and Sam for making a memorable long weekend.

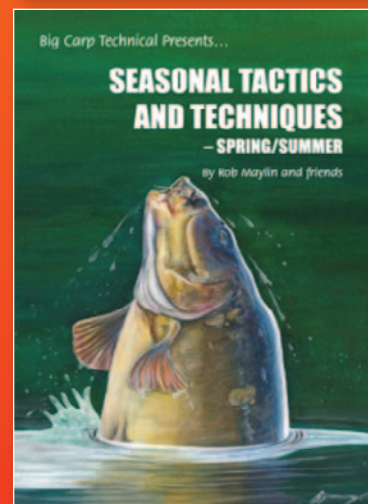
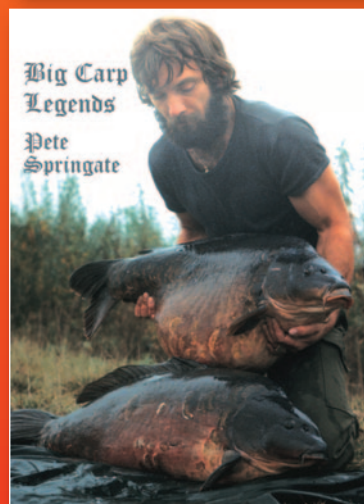
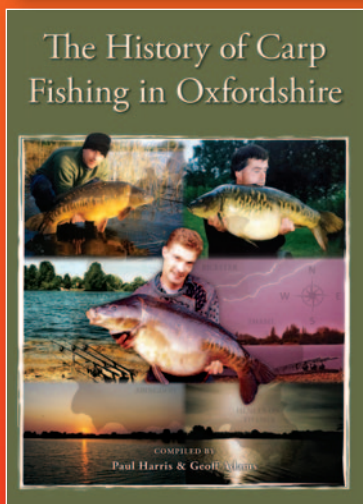
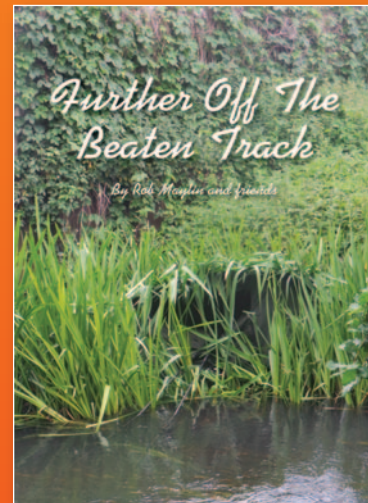
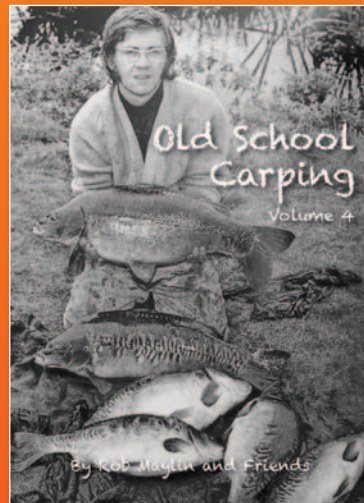
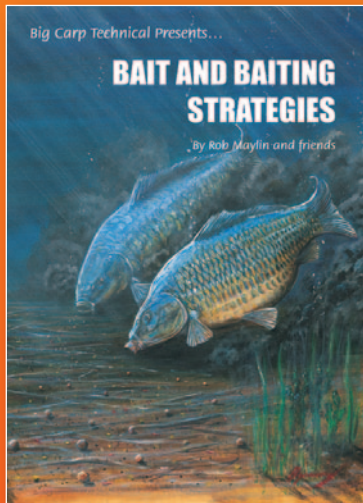
That's a wrap until next time.... But stay tuned for creedence "the return"

Tight lines! Chris french ■

Bag Yourself a Score

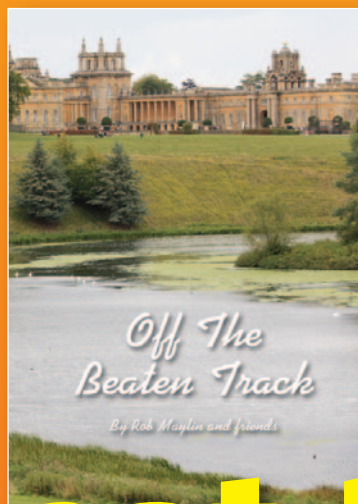


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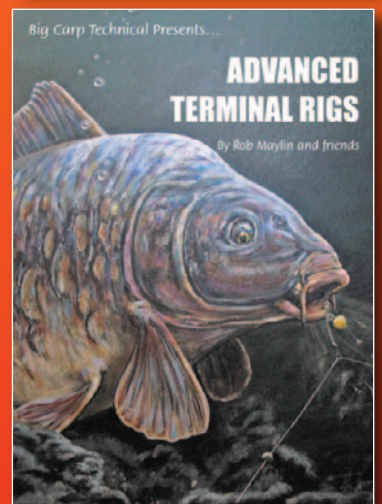
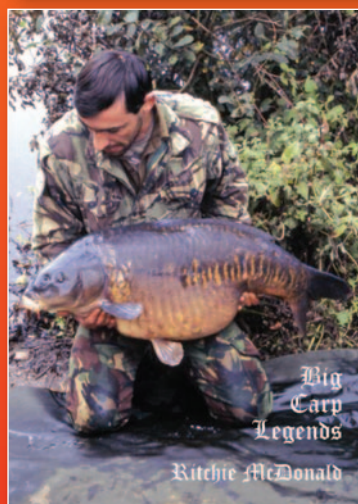
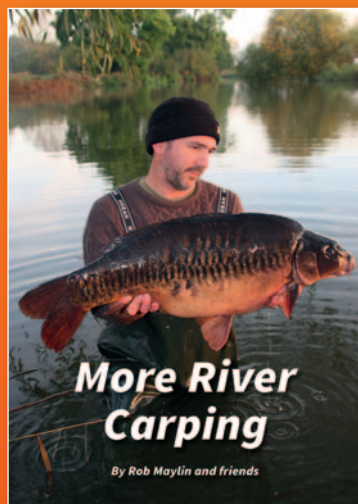
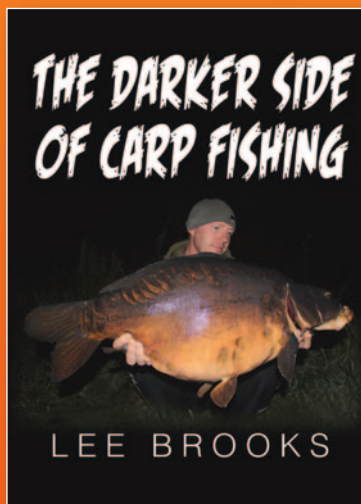


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Autumn Made UK 50

By Darren Lamey

Following a 39lb'er the week before on a quick night, I scheduled in a weekend session on the lead up to the new moon. With some mild, moody weather coming in, it felt good. I set up on the back of the wind, in a swim I was familiar with so was able to get rods out hassle free, rigging up with multi-combi rigs with size 4 Klors and snowmen hookbaits.

The night passed by, but I had noticed several fish showing away from the baited spot, so made a note of the area, leading it the following day, so if they turned up again, I could flick out a single to the area. In the





later part of the evening, a 27lb mirror slipped up off the baited spot, a promising sign, but as the night passed, things seemed quiet, but again, I noticed fish showing in the same area, away from the bait. I reeled in one of the rods and rigged up a solidz bag, which I cast to the showing fish. Trap set and fish continued to show, so it looked good.

The night passed and at dawn, I lay in the bag watching daybreak, as the left-hand rod on the solid bag was away! I picked up to a heavy resistance, as gentle heavy plods confirmed a good fish. She stayed deep throughout the battle and a big brown flank rolled short of the net, it was a big fish.

With steady pressure, I eased her

towards me and finally, she was mine, one I recognised straight away. At 51lb 12oz, it was an autumn maker and such a buzz!

The solid bag doing the business yet again, rigged up with a 5-inch multi rig, tied with 18lb Dark Matter, a medium kicker and size 4. A 5oz inline fished drop off alongside Dark Matter Tubing completed the rig. ■



Annual Blind Veterans UK Charity Match Highlights

£3,655 raised in the 48-hour charity match in aid of Blind Veterans UK by 17 anglers in the match and many other supporters including a very substantial donation from The White Horse in Southminster. Biggest fish pictured, winning match weight over 76lbs. Well done to all that took part.



Callum's Common

Featuring Andy Leather

Andy can't seem to put a foot wrong on the Cambridgeshire venue at the moment, achieving some great captures off the top, on zigs and now off the bottom.

After arriving on the Lagoon following work on the Friday, Andy baited up a swim and tempted two fish to 30lb 6oz on pop-ups, but it was when he switched over to a Secret 7 mini dumbbell bottom bait that something rather special occurred.

Later that night, Andy found himself cradling his second-largest UK carp, the magnificent Callum's Common at 48lb 10oz at its biggest-ever weight.

"Well, what a weekend's session that turned out to be," said Andy.

"I arrived after work to find the lake



not too busy and, after a walk around, settled on the windward bank in a shallow weedy area. I located a nice area with a firm drop and baited it with mulched-up Secret 7 and Bug

boilies, before despatching two Fruitylicious pop-ups over the top and going to bed. I was up the following morning at 4 o'clock and after watching for three hours had seen





very little, so jumped back in the bag for a few more hours' sleep. Then at 8.30am, the left-hand rod was away with what turned out to be a 25lb fully.

"The second bite didn't come until 5.30pm, which was a rather twitchy take. The fish fought on the surface all the way to the net and turned out to be a fish named Magnus at a spawned-out weight of 30lb 6oz.

"Earlier in the day, I'd been listening to Adam Penning on a podcast talking about only using bottom baits which struck a chord with me, so I baited the spot again and this time put a third rod on it but this time with a Secret 7 mini dumbbell straight out the bag. Then at 10.30pm, I had a blistering take on that very rod! What ensued was a ponderous, heavy battle during which my headtorch died, but I netted the fish and could see in the full moonlight it was a big old unit, so I went to sort my other light out and when I flicked it on I was greeted with a common in the net of monstrous proportions!

"I got everything together and with the help of Gordy (Howes), we hoisted

it up on to the scales and the needle flew round to a ridiculous 48lb 10oz, which is a lake record and a top

weight for the fish known as Callum's Common. St Ives, where dreams are made!" ■



Belgium

By Russell Bedford

I've had some good trips of late and this did not disappoint. I started fishing the canals from a young age and moved onto commercials which lead to carp, then onto fishing canals for carp. Myself and friends who I fished canals with always said we will fish Belgium one day!!!!

Well I decided to follow that path be it with friends or on my own, I was fully set to go July 2020 but covid restrictions put a stop to the plan, last year I finally got to go overseas on an amazing trip to France which relit the fire to get to Belgium so I set the date for May which was the earliest I could do with work commitments.

At the start of the year Iain contacted me who I'd only ever met once on a Carbon bait, Bait guru social ask-

ing if I had any trips planned. I told him of Belgium and although he had never fished canals or overseas, he said he would love to come. To have someone to share the journey with was great but a big responsibility as him blanking on his first overseas trip was very possible with this style trip.

I've spent endless hours gaining any information possible and from that has come a lot of setbacks but also a great Belgium friend.

What started as likes on pictures to a conversation sharing a passion of canal carping became the key part to our trip. We arranged to meet Elias who I'd only ever spoken to on social media, my wife said I was mad.

After driving through the night, we arrived at 3am and got our heads down, before meeting Elias at 9am, and the next 36 hours became a mas-

sive learning curve and test of character. From thinking UK tactics would be strong enough to cope with the extreme fishing environments, to having to put faith in pop ups that I never use in the UK.

We caught fish and lost fish adapting tactics to suit although we were satisfied to have caught, which we had said would be the ultimate goal, we knew there was more out there to achieve.

On the Monday we set off on our own adventure but after 1.5hrs of driving the lack of sleep the constant moving caught up with me and we decided to fish a place closer to where we were heading to catch up on much needed sleep. We ended up doing few nights here and although we didn't catch, we saw Belgium anglers and made new friends. We







carried on looking at multiple venues looking for fish but to no avail. The days and nights all became a blur but finally we found the most beautiful piece of canal, gin clear, weedy and loads of fish. I lost 2 fish which after seeing nothing for what seemed a life time was crushing, we decided to bait here for a return the next day, now in hindsight we should have stayed for the night as the following day was a disaster, we returned to very few fish and groups of kids drinking, swimming and jumping off a bridge and although they were having a great time and I did debate the bridge jump myself it had clearly moved the fish on.

We returned to the night spot as seeing the Belgium anglers had given us confidence in this spot, we woke up to motionless rods and more enormous boats.

Frustrated and determined I told Iain come on were going to catch a fish, with no more idea how I was going to achieve this to previous days I knew we were running out of time and the same actions would lead to the same results. I headed to a lake where I'd seen a picture of the best

looking common I've ever seen jet black with a yellow belly and being a lake how hard could they be to catch..... well, they were the most spooky fish I've ever tried to catch, and Iain was plagued by turtles eating his baits. After 2 hours it started to rain things were going bad to worse rapidly, but I was catching today so off to the next lake we went. It didn't take us long to spot fish cruising just under the surface and we both felt there was an opportunity here. We grabbed a stalking rod each and some left over bread and off we went, it didn't take long for Iain to be into a fish and then another. I couldn't quite believe how quick he caught the second fish as he had literally just returned the first fish. What I then found out was Iain took 2 rods a margin rod and a flora rod. Great initiative which set the day up well for us, I followed suit and was soon catching. We had some great sport here and although nothing massive after the last few days a bend in the rod was so welcome.

We went off to a new night spot we had baited earlier in the week with a newfound confidence and had a Bel-

gium kebab and chips which although very different to the UK was very nice. The night drew in and the rain returned with the most amazing thunderstorm. Morning came with no fish which we felt should have happened, so we headed back to the lake from the day before with the plan of fishing 2 rods each and putting a big hit of bait out hoping for multiple takes, on our return it was clear the fish were not as active as the previous day, but we stuck to our plan. We did end up catching but not like the previous day. With only two nights left we decided to head back to a spot we had caught a decent carp from in a last-ditch effort for another nice carp.

Well Iain had 2 takes losing one and catching a stunning golden common with a dropped tail and huge belly, what a night and we knew fish were in the area. This was a great result but left me feeling like I may not see another Belgium carp with their only being one night left.

Now if I could write a perfect ending unknown to either of us it was going to happen and later we joked on how you see this on videos and say it can't of happened like that, well





it seems it can.

Earlier in the day while on the phone to my good lady she said why don't you pray for a fish!!! I said I have every night, we have all been there..... please let my alarms wake me, here fishy fishy fishy. Her reply well then don't tonight, and it might happen, well happen it did.

After an hour of my rods being out as the sun was setting my rod pulled round, finally my time. At this stage any fish will do but when this fish went in the net, we knew it was not like the others. It tipped the scales to 33lb our first Belgium canal 30 and a stunning fish to end my trip but this was not the end.....

I'm not sure the exact time but I know it was dark, and Iain was in a deep sleep, when I shouted him to bring the net he didn't wake up. I'd already started following the fish trying to make line when I realised Iain wasn't following so I had no net. Knowing the further I got from Iain

the less likely he was to wake so I had to do the unthinkable and let the clutch off so I could walk back to the net. There was no other choice and waking each other had worked every time until now but I guess the week's events finally caught up with Iain. I've got the net and I'm gaining back the line I lost at a rapid rate on a fish that I knew was a long way from being netted. After a prolonged battle I saw a mirror roll which was my first canal mirror, desperate to land this one now my first mirror what a result for my last night. Still not knowing its true size when it finally went over the net it was clear to see it was big, very big compared to everything else we had caught and every time I looked in the net, I thought there was a 40lb mirror sat looking beaten.

I went to get Iain from his slumber knowing he wasn't going to believe me saying I've got another especially as we have helped each other on every fish. Once we got to the net, he

couldn't believe it either, a 30 earlier and for certain another 30. We weighed it and photo'd it, tipping the scales to 37lb a brace of 30s on the last night a mirror and a common for me the only way this night could get better was for Iain to catch, unfortunately time to pack up came too quickly and it was time for us to head home. I'm sure next time Iain will get his redemption on the one that got away.

Iain caught the most fish during our trip, I caught the most species and the bigger fish. My first fish was a bream and I'd have had a photo with it if they allowed me. Iain found Bait Guru orange EFs were the favoured hook bait which luckily I'd brought for the trip because of seeing the team's great results with them. We took Carbon Baits power jars which saw us out catch locals at the lake.

In all an insane trip with great company making great memories. ■



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Another String To 'The Bow'

By Max Cottis

Max Cottis just returned from his social at Lee Bowyer's Etang de Bow in the Champagne region in France. Following the draw, Max was fortunate enough to come out second and choose to fish the far end of the lake in Peg 9 which fished towards the tree line along the end bank and into a corner that the carp love to frequent. Fishing short 5" stiff fluorocarbon booms with 1" braid loops creating a slip D presentation, these were fished with Fruity Squid Pastel Barrel wafers over a bed of lake particle soaked in Essential IB Active Ade syrup and Essential Cell crumb laced with 10mm Essential Cell freezer baits. Over the course of the session, Max landed 8 fish with five over 50lbs up to 58lb 12oz. Brilliant, Max. ■





Exclusive



My life in Fishing

By Roy Brett

I have fished all my life since the ripe old age of three and still fishing at 65, still loving all types of fishing but Carp being the favourite, I started fishing with my Dad bless him, my first fish caught being a perch out of the Royal military canal at Dymchurch, it was a huge fish all of 3 oz, I sneaked back to the caravan we were staying in and put it in a draw, you can imagine the smell after a couple of days, a clip round the ear for that one!! Mid to late 60s my dad went onto sea fishing and of course I was with him learning the ropes, we had some fantastic catches and great times with my dad.

I kept sea fishing well into my twenties but started slowly getting into Fly Fishing, I became a pretty good caster in fly fishing and came in handy in later years fishing for carp with a fly rod, great fun playing a 14 pound mirror on light tackle, my carp fishing started around 1990 on holiday down in Cornwall fishing with a match rod catching carp off the top





with bread, that was it I was hooked, excuse the pun, I started buying carp rods and bite alarms then started joining clubs, first big one being Mid Kent fisheries, I struggled on most of the lakes but managed a beauty of 19lb out of the Stour lake. I became a bailiff down at Nuralite lakes in Higham, Kent. The lakes had stunning fish and were Leney strain, biggest out over the years was 25lb+, one of my favourite places I've ever fished along with Redmire, I've been lucky enough to fish the Holy Grail of fishing 3 times but my first week of fishing it was the best with bagging 4 fish, which included Raspberry at 24lb+ and the Crooked mouth Common at 22lb with 2 smaller Commons. I fished Willow but fed "In Willow" with chum mixers for 3 days to get the carp's confidence, my first cast went out after the 3rd day and a fish took the mixer straight away but I couldn't stop it as it bolted to the other side of the pool and seemed to bang into the bank, I was only using a 1 and 3 quarter pound test curve rod so it totally done me. The next



cast went straight out because the fish were still feeding, a big pair of lips came up and bang off it went again, great scrap and Raspberry ended up in the net, fantastic. The crooked mouth Common I caught on two bits of corn. The downside of fishing Redmire was the following year, I was fishing "In Willow" we were told that one of the big carp didn't look well by the bailiff and if we found the fish dead, Bury it if it was a common or phone him if it was a mirror, well a couple of days into our trip a fish was floating past my swim belly up and sad to say it was Raspberry, we were totally gutted. I'm still fishing as much as I can, sea fishing





and coarse fishing including the river for barbel and chub.

I had a life scare a couple of years being diagnosed with cancer but after treatment and being off work for 6 months I'm back to full health and back to work and best of all I'm fishing more, I fish a lovely little water called Lovelace fishery after moving down to Tenterden 8 years ago, lots of other places to fish too, living life to the full now Rob. My wife loves fishing to which is handy, we've had many trips out to France fishing catching my personal best of 64lb out there and Carol my wife's personal best being 48lb 8oz, my English best is 28lb so my goal this year is to catch an English 30, we've also caught some big catfish too, biggest being just short of 200lb. Fishing has been good for my well-being as it's not just about the fishing but what goes on around you with the birdlife and wildlife too. ■

Joining the UK 50s Club

By Tracy Khan

I've had a good start on my new syndicate, it's still early days, but I feel like I'm settling in and learning the ropes. I arrived at the lake Thursday evening and found a swim, that I had fished previously, was free. So I decided it was as good a start point as any. It was pitch black so I waited till first light to put the rods out.

I had heard fish showing in the night, I found a clear spot amongst the weed at about 60 yards out. By late morning the fish were showing in the vicinity so I was confident of a bite. That evening passed with no action and the activity seemed to die down. The conditions changed and a move was on the cards.

Once in the new swim, I quickly set

about finding spots and applied a bit of TNT. Throughout the night, one of my rods was getting liners and I heard a big one show. I had liners early morning and it wasn't long until that rod was away.

Whilst playing the fish, luckily it managed to find safe haven in a weed bed. I managed to slip my waders on and proceeded to wade down my margin to try and change the angle on the fish. It worked! The fish slowly started coming out of the weed and the fight continued. It was a battle and a half and I just knew I was connected to a big one. I just didn't know how big she was.

With every lunge and with weed up the line, it was a nerve racking situation.

I had called for Kristian next door to

me who got in and netted the big girl.

Once she was in the net safe and sound we had a good look at her. Kris knew exactly what carp this was, but I was unsure. I didn't quite believe it. He kept repeating she looks 50lb-plus to me, which just didn't sink in and still probably hasn't, to be fair.

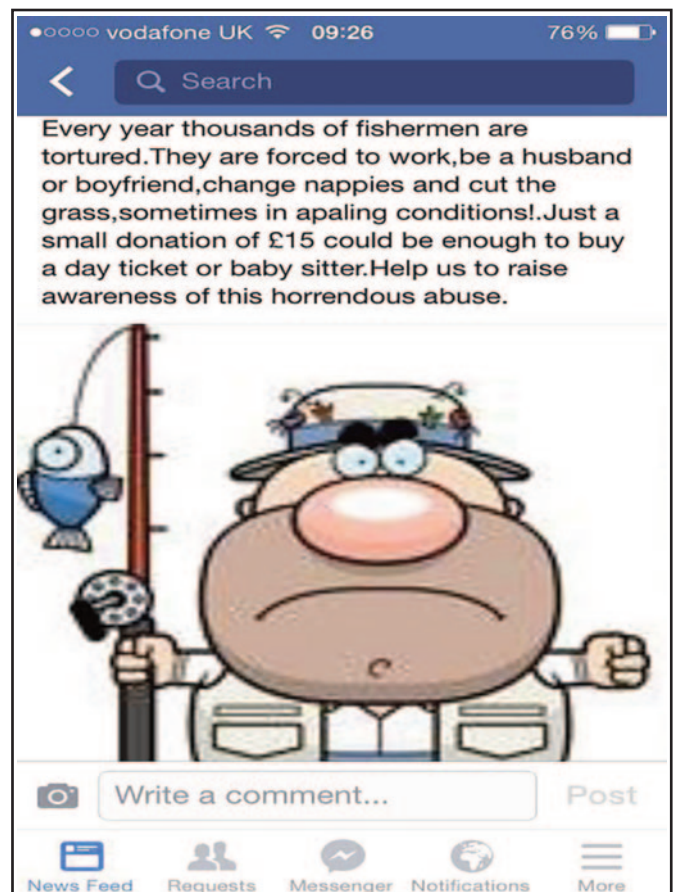
She is called the Big Common for a reason. She was immense, absolutely pristine. Her wrist was bigger than my two wrist put together. To see such a special carp in the flesh is a privilege and one of the most special and emotional moments in my angling so far, as this will be the only PB that My lovely boy Dexter was not a part of.

She went 50lbs 7oz on the Rubens and is now my English PB Common.





Carpy Humour



My First Doubles

By Stewart Crowther

In the 1960s, I was a tench fisher, in fact I was a member of the recently formed Tench-fishers group, the mighty Carp was a fantasy fish. I was reading all I could get my hands on about them, which apart from the writings of Richard Walker was not much....Carp articles in the magazines were very scarce. Towards the end of the 1960s I was fishing waters that did have a few Carp in, and I managed to catch my first of the

species. Eastnor Castle lake contained genuine wild Carp, these were the first I targeted, floating crust close to the lilies at night being the successful method. I have never been anywhere since containing fish like these, the biggest I caught was only 3lb.+ but they fought like nothing I had hooked before, often reaching the lilies despite my attempts to stop them.

By the start of 1970's I had already caught a number of King Carp, sev-

eral waters having been located close to home that held them. Venues had to be reasonably near, I could only afford a motorbike for transport at the time. None of the Carp I had caught were double figure fish thus far. In 1972 Jack Hilton released 'Quest for Carp', and after reading it, what was a mere pastime was starting to become an obsession!

One of the waters I had heard about, a three acre gravel pit, was now producing doubles, the stocking having taken place around 1967. This was to be the chosen water. I had known about the place for some years, my first attempts were with my mate Geoff during the winter of 1973/4, we blanked that winter. On reflection it was not the best time to start, I only heard of one Carp being caught that winter, a 12 lb. Mirror.

In October 73, I read an article in 'Angling magazine' by a chap named Paul Snapp, it was titled, Something Special. He discussed some of the baits he had been using on the waters in Kent, the hot bed of Carp fishing. Secrecy was the order of the day, I mentioned the article to no one!! I wondered if anyone local had spotted it? The going bait at the time was, trout pellet paste, this was the bait Geoff and I had blanked on in the winter! I was looking forward to June 15th...74, it was a Saturday, and I would be ready for the midnight start. There was not a more exciting day of the year in those days, the opening night after the long three months close season. Everything had been prepared meticulously. The bait had been rolled into balls of around 24mm. Some were sausage meat and bread crumb and some were sardine and bread crumb, the liquid content was egg, the balls were dropped in boiling water for 90 seconds to seal them.

Then disaster struck on Friday 14th, the clutch on the motorbike decided it was time for a replacement... oh bugger!! Ok, there was Saturday morning to fix the problem. I picked up the parts Friday afternoon,

Carrying on from Fred Wilton's letter, and others...

SOMETHING SPECIAL

by Paul Snapp



Frozen bait-balls, straight from the freezer and ready for action.

IN THE CARP ANGLER'S WORLD A cult has grown; it is there all around, and yet it is intangible. You can see it, often smell it, but few will talk of it.

Its members are legion towards secrecy (a not unknown factor in carp angling, whatever the subject). When a new potion is formed, and carp come rolling in, the person concerned is elevated to the deity. The young stand in awe, the old in disbelief, the ignorant ignore and the intelligent take note, and realize that another special bait has been formulated to join the ranks of who knows how many?

For better or for worse, the "specials" are here to stay; the search for the ultimate bait goes on behind the locked doors of many angler's homes. All are convinced that there is a bait, almost within grasp, that will help them catch all the carp they could dream of, without serving an apprenticeship in angling; without knowing the vagaries of this fish called carp. A bait that can be cast at will into any water at any time and "hey presto,"

could only obtain it carp would be caught, irrespective of any angling ability. They do not seem to realize that, apart from the well known "fluke" fish that falls to a novice on his first session, most big fish, irrespective of species, fall to those who make a study of the sport, and the regular capture of specimens is a reward only for the most studious.

From my conversations with anglers interested in the evolution of "specials" there appears to be a division of opinion. One side is convinced that the secret of success lies in offering a bait that is of a higher food value to the carp than anything to be found in that particular water. When a level is reached that is considered desirable to that water it is saturated with this bait.

The carp eat the offerings regularly and (one hopes) begin to appreciate the value of the bait as a food, being literally weaned from the lake's natural food. The baiting is maintained at regular intervals and fishing carried out in the area.

The other opinion appears to be this: Get to know as many baits and ways of

Unfortunately we "specials," and the draw most convers one may say, quite I spent three years carp, using conventional of the third season different mixtures fourth carping season two of these mixtures pre-baited. During runs and put 13 c more than the tot three seasons I T carp, 29 of them I three different w "specials" was b

Since then lots have been tested "specials," their ual merit are as f

A lot of subst "body" to enable practical bait. I n paragraphs to "b use two: (1) Th as "Go-Cat," w down into powe aim at a talcum Growers Mash, for young chick carefully sifted used.

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Slip onto you part of a biro, ti bait around the of plastic tube the bend of the piece of crust o polyvinylalcoh

A bait so pre hard cast with

The first is a well known, a most species: I straight from th rough balls, th for hundreds o country. It can by the addition at the ratio of sausage meat.



10lb. Mirror.

but I was out for a few pints in the evening...as you do, so the bike job was all set for Saturday morning, easy. To be fair fitting the new clutch went according to plan, it was easy, that was until I tried to refit the casing, the new gasket did not match. By then we were into Saturday afternoon, time to panic, only one motor bike shop still open. Out came the push-bike, a manic three mile ride to the shop. I was met with " no mate we ain't got one of them" now it was real panic stations. The only choice I had was to buy a sheet of gasket material to cut my own gasket, a time consuming job. Eventually the bike was ready to rock and fully loaded, the only problem being, it was now 8 o'clock Saturday evening, kick off 4 hours away!!

Half an hour's careful ride through the lanes loaded with all that was needed for the night. I finally arrived and propped the bike against a tree at 8-45pm.

The three acre pit was, and still is, a club water, of course... all the local anglers had, just like me, been patiently waiting for the beginning of the new season, it looked as though every swim was taken, damn the busted motorbike and the late arrival !!!

I loaded the tackle on my back and started my circuit of the pit, my confidence was pretty low by then. The pit was quite open in the 70's hardly any of today's trees existed, but the grass was long with no obvious path, making progress tedious, me, being loaded up with a nights tackle. I reached the far side of the pit passing the small island, just to the right was a peninsula jutting out into the water, a miracle, a vacant swim, I think the only free spot on the pit that night !

It had to be a miracle, if I had been the first angler to arrive, this would most likely have been my first choice of swim. There was a young chap set up in the swim to the right, I dropped

my tackle in the peninsula swim and went to ask him where he would be putting his baits, and if he minded me moving into the swim next door ? Although I don't remember his name, he turned out to be a very nice fellow. He was happy for me to fish in the swim, he said I would not be fishing close to his spots after I had explained where I intended to fish.

I was keen to get the umbrella up and set up the rods, I only had a chair for the night, my intention was to watch the rods all night. I knew that a clean gravel strip ran from close to the island from left to right, it was only about 15 yards out where it was close to the island, as it stretched to the right it was more like 18 yards out before it changed from gravel to silt.

The pit is not deep anywhere, the depth on the gravel strip varied from between 3 and 4 feet, getting deeper as it stretched away from the island. Although there were no trees for cover, this swim was ideal, there was

an old gravel hump at the water's edge that I could sit behind.

By the time I had everything settled to my satisfaction it was past 11 o'clock, not long until the first casts of the new season, the atmosphere was electric. My new friend joined me in the swim, the hump hiding us from the water, he had been set up since early afternoon and was becoming impatient. We talked Carp and drank tea, he, like myself was yet to catch a double figure Carp! Would tonight be the night? The place was packed, every swim occupied but most were not fishing for Carp, they had to be there for the opening, many of them not to be seen again that year.

I had already planned where the baits were to be cast, the sausage bait would go 15 yards out closest to the island, the sardine bait would be cast to the right at 18 yards. The minutes ticked by, even though I had arrived late and was sweating from exertion, that last hour seemed never ending. At last a few minutes before midnight we heard splashes as baits were being cast, this was the signal we were waiting for, my friend returned excitedly to his pitch. My baits were hanging from the tips, I had side hooked them on to the Au lion D'or hooks ready to go. I believed this would be the first time these Carp had encountered this type of bait, I

had not prebaited, and hoped that no one else fishing the water had not noticed Paul Snepp's article!

It was midnight, out went the sausage bait to the left, six free baits were thrown into the rings of the disturbance from the cast. The sardine bait was cast the 18 yards to right hand spot, the size of the baits made it easy to land the freebies around it. Having never caught a Carp from the pit I felt apprehensive about my chances, was I in the right place, would the bait be recognised?

I sat behind the rods obscured from the water by the gravel hump, I watched and listened, the night was overcast and warm. At 1-30 am the BJ



10-14 Mirror Mitchell 410's and B. James cane rods.



Three Mirrors. And the Springbow landing net from Dons of Edmonton.

alarm on the left hand rod screamed at me, the silver paper indicator hit the rod and in disbelief I sped from the chair. I grabbed the rod and pulled into what was obviously an angry Carp, by the time I had made contact it was past the island into open water. I knew the 11lb Sylcast line was reliable and the fish, despite putting up a good fight, was soon being drawn over the net cord. My friend next door was quickly round to find out what the splashing was about. A lovely looking Mirror was in the net, we weighed it together, 10-14, my first double, we put it in a sack in the margin, waiting for first light for photos. My friend was impressed, I was ecstatic. I put another sausage bait on and recast, back on the same spot? Another six freebies thrown out, we sat behind the rods drinking tea dis-

cussing my good fortune. About an hour later I heard a fish crash close to the island, I stood up and I could see the disturbance was very near to where the recently cast bait lay. I sat back down in anticipation, before I got comfortable the silver paper was tight against the rod again, the alarm was howling, I was holding a bent rod for the second time. This one was taking line from the clutch, luckily it moved straight out and gave little trouble, the fish had found some weed, I pulled harder and freed it easily, I slowly reeled it towards me, after several lunges close in number two was in the Springbow. This one just a double 10 lb, another nice mirror retained until dawn.

The rod was rebaited and cast back to the spot, the last of the sausage freebies were thrown out. My friend

made more tea and stayed in my swim, having had no bites himself. It was beginning to get light as we sat drinking tea and discussing the night's events, the buzzer on the right hand rod startled us both. A first bite on the sardine bait, once again the silver paper was dancing against the rod.

I lifted the rod, this one headed right, kiting toward my friend's area, I tightened up and the rod bent, another good scrap with a tussle under the rod tip, after a couple of minutes my friend netted the 9-14 mirror. My first success on the water three Carp, unbelievable. We later found out they were the only Carp captured at the pit that night. Unfortunately, my friend never had a bite, what was even more unfortunate... I never saw him again. ■

My Time Fishing The South Lake

By Darren Butler

Looking for a good book? look no further... A History of Yateley has four superb 300 plus page volumes, they are all A4 large format books, covering the early beginnings at this incredible venue through to up-to-date accounts of these historic sites. A host of successful anglers, hundreds of incredible colour photos documenting the amazing stock of fish at this prolific complex. This month we feature Darren Butlers chapter on the South Lake which can be found in volume four.

It was in May 2015 that I bought my FAS ticket to fish some of the Yateley waters. As with all my carp fishing, I like to focus my time on one lake. I walked around the east

and south complex, talking to anglers already fishing the lakes, most of whom said South Lake was not worth fishing as the lake didn't hold any real surprises, so I decided to try it anyway.

My first trip was in May for two nights, and after a walk around the lake, I choose to fish a swim called the Graveyard, as there were a few fish close in. With South Lake being a weedy lake, it was a case of finding the small clear spots to place my baits. I scattered a few boilies and half a tin of sweetcorn on the spots. That evening I had my first Yateley carp, a 19lb common – happy days. It was a few weeks before I was back on the South Lake in a swim called Half Way, the only swim on the lake with grass on the bank, so not a swim that looked like it got fished much. Over

the next few nights, I managed to land two more carp and my first 20, a lovely 24lb mirror.

Over the next six months, I was starting to learn a lot about the lake, and on my November visit I saw a few fish show in the Nightmare swim. After leading around, I found a small gravel spot about 35 yards out, so one rod was placed on that, and the other rod on a silt spot next to it. That night the silt rod was away, and after a ten-minute battle my first South Lake 30 was in the net, a lovely 31lb mirror. With the photos done, the rod was put back out on the silt spot. As I noted this down on my phone, I noticed this was my 30th carp I've landed, and it was a 30 – how mad is that? In the early morning, the silt rod was away again, and a nice 27lb common was in the net. I was over the moon with



Fish called The Big Common, 39lb 10oz.



Fish called Tango, 37lb 8oz.

these two fish. Over the next 24 hours I could see a lot of fish showing down the other end of the lake, but with a few people fishing that end already, it would have to wait till next time.

On my return in December, I sat in the Garden Gate swim and saw the fish show in the same area as last month. As I'd not fished this swim before, I had a lead around, and 35/40 yards out to my right, I found a small clear spot about 3ft wide. My second rod was on a silt spot 40 yards out in front with four Spombs of boilie and corn on both the spots. That night the right hand was away, and I had my second 30lb carp, a lovely common. The next day on the same rod I landed a 21lb common, and that was my last session of 2015.

Back on the lake in January 2016, I was hoping to jump in the same swim, and when I arrived, the swim was free. With three nights to fish, the same spots were baited, and my second fish landed was a 31lb common. In that session I had five more fish, four of them over 20lb. All the carp were coming from the right hand rod. The next week the lake froze over, so

it was a few weeks before I was back fishing in the same swim, hoping the fish were still feeding. It was not long before a nice looking 25lb mirror was in the net, this time from the left hand rod. The fish were still showing, and over the next two nights, four more carp were in the bag.

My next session was in February, and once again the swim was free. After casting a lead on the right hand spot, I noticed it was double the size now, so it showed the fish were feeding on it. The lake was starting to get busy with other anglers now, and a few fish were being caught from all over the lake, which was a good sign. Rods were back on the same spots, and within ten minutes the right hand rod was away, and a lovely dark 27lb common was netted. The next morning I had a 24lb mirror and a couple of 16lb mirrors, all from the right hand spot. With the light fading, it was a surprise when the left hand rod was away. It was only a small 15lb mirror, but nice to have a fish off this spot too. Just before packing up, I also had a 26lb mirror from the left hand rod.

After having six fish from my last

session, I was happy to see the same swim empty again. As I sat watching across the lake, the fish started to show more over my left hand rod. So it was no surprise when I had a screaming take from that spot, this time from a 24lb mirror. The next morning at first light I managed two more Yateley carp – a 25lb common and 17lb mirror. But the best was still to come, and after I set the traps for the night, a good sleep was had.

Early morning, and a bite was on the cards, as the fish were starting to show. My next fish was a lovely 31lb mirror and not long after, a 25lb mirror. All these fish were coming from the left hand spot, and not a bite from the right spot now. As it got dark it was the left rod again, and after a 20-minute fight, this one looked like another 30lb-plus mirror. On the scales she went 31lb, and in the early morning I had one more carp, a 22lb mirror, before heading home. What a session – two 30s and four 20s – happy days! Because of this warm winter, the fish just seem to have carried on feeding. I fished the same swim on my next visit for two nights



Fish called Henrietta, 36lb.



34lb 2oz.



32lb 8oz.



31lb.



31lb.



31lb.



FISHING RESORT



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31lb.



31lb.

for two fish – 20lb and 18lb mirrors. The fish were showing out in front of a swim called the Boss, but as this was the most popular swim on the lake, it was not an easy swim to get in.

It was early March, time to try the Boss swim, and luckily for me the lad was leaving that morning. Now most anglers use a bait boat in this swim and fish it under a tree close to the island, but as I don't use one, it would have to be cast. After having a lead around there was a big gravel area out in front, which most people fished to. Now as I pulled the lead back I found a lovely silt spot about 15 yards back from the gravel. I baited up with boilie and corn and put both rods on this spot. The first run was that night from a 17lb mirror, and I was well happy to have a fish off the spot so soon. Before I had time to put the rod back out, my other rod was away. This fish gave me great fight, and wow, what a carp! It turned out to be Henrietta at 36lb, and with the night pho-

tos done, I slipped her back. Over the next 48 hours, I managed six more carp upto 26lb, and I was one happy angler.

One week later, I was back in the Boss swim, and with both rods on the same spots it wasn't long before the fish were feeding over my spot. The first carp was a stunning 26lb mirror, and one of the best looking carp in the lake. With three more carp that night, I was ready for a morning walk round the lake, but just as I was about to pull my rods in, the left rod was away. After a ten-minute fight, I slipped the net under a nice looking mirror, and on the scales she went 31lb. After my walk there were fish still showing over my spots, but I like to rest the swim for a few hours to let the fish have a free feed.

Now with the rods back on the spot, it was early evening before my next Yateley carp picked up my bait, and this fish was only a few ounces under 30lb. These fish were starting to feed on the corn big time, and over

the next two nights, seven more carp were on my mat. We now entered springtime; I love fishing at this time of year, and I was back in the Boss swim. Not knowing how much bait was going in the swim, two single baits were cast out. With no fish that night, it was time to put some bait over the spots, and within half an hour, a 26lb mirror was mine, and then a really old looking common at 28lb. With all the fish showing over my spots, it wasn't long before I landed one of the best looking commons from South Lake at 24lb, a lovely chestnut brown colour. South Lake was showing me a lot of the stunning fish it was holding, and over the 12 nights I fished the Boss swim, I managed to land 35 fish! What I found funny was some of the anglers fishing South Lake said I was fishing the Boss swim too short.

April, and the lake was very busy down the bottom end, so I was looking around the top end, and I noticed a few fish close to the opposite bank.



29lb 14oz.



28lb 2oz.



25lb.

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

Carp fishing has a very rich history. In the early days of it becoming popular, Kent and the Colne Valley were the hot beds of our fledgling pastime and of course there was the legendary Redmire Pool.

Into the new Millennium and one area above all others exploded onto the scene, this was of course Oxfordshire. The quality of the stock of carp in this county was incredible but where did these beautiful scaly beasts come from? When did the Leney's get stocked? What were the origins of the famous Linch Hill fish and what of the history of the now infamous Linear Fisheries? Over the course of the pages of this book all will be revealed as Paul and Geoff have put together the facts of how these lakes were stocked and also banded together many successful local anglers, some of which have never published any of their catches, who tell their fishing tales on these stunning lakes.

With more than 300 pictures of some of this country's finest ever carp and several full page maps, this huge volume tells the story of Oxfordshire's carp fishing history whilst still leaving a little bit of mystery for your imagination!

Included within the pages of this book is the foreword written by local legendary angler and former tackle dealer Joe Taylor. We have chapters from Paul Kitchin on the legendary Vauxhall Lake. David Brian Williams tells us the story of the lakes in the City of Oxford itself! Chris Robinson has written an incredible chapter on two of Dorchester's lakes. Orchid and The Lagoon. The history told in Chris' chapter on these lakes is just incredible and wait until you see the pictures!

Next door to The Lagoon is Dorchester's Alliance Club Lake and Joe Forrester tells his story of the incredible scaly carp that inhabited this lake and how he outwitted them.

We have a real coup in the fact that brilliant all-round Oxford angler John Everard agreed to be interviewed and he has an incredible amount of historical information to share, as has Gerald Stratford who is also included in this informative chapter.

No book about Oxfordshire's carp fishing history would be complete without the story of Oxford's first forty and what a story it is. Richard 'Paddy' Paradine has never written or published any of his catches before and we have his interview here for you of his historic catch which was kept under the radar for so long.

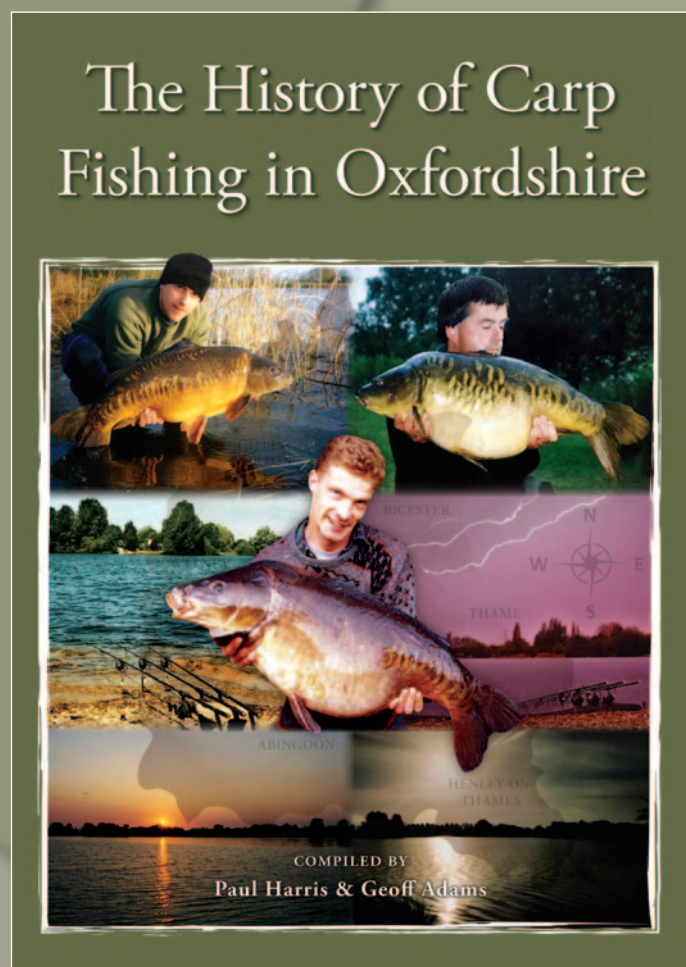
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing on The Leisure Park was back in the day when the Leney's were still about and culminates with his capture of The Big Leney at its biggest ever weight, the iconic 'Paddy's Fish'.

We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson and Milton Pools from Stuart Rothwell. Danny Aplin has written about his time on Linch Hill which will just blow you away! His pictures alone are worth purchasing this book.

Nick Franklin has written a lovely chapter on one of Oxfordshire's little known lakes and his account really hits home that carp fishing isn't always about the numbers game. Sometimes it's just you fishing for the unknown! There are superb chapters on Manor Farm from Paul Hathaway and St Johns from Stewart Roper.

If that wasn't enough Paul and Geoff have wrote chapters themselves which cover the stocking history of lakes, how the gravel company ARC played such a big part in the early stockings of Oxford's lakes, the early days of Linch Hill and Linear Fisheries and facts and stories regarding Oxford's other lakes, some very off the radar!

If you like your history, you like carp fishing and love stories of beautiful scaly carp, there is only one book to purchase this year. Here it is...



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AVAILABLE THIS AUTUMN



27lb.



26lb.

I jumped in a swim called Alan's, a nice small swim. After a lead around, a few nice clear spots were found – one in seven feet of water and the other close to the opposite bank. With boilie and corn on the spots, I sat back with tea in hand. A few small bubbles appeared over my deep spot, and at midnight that rod was away and a 26lb mirror was netted.

The next morning I spent most of the day up a tree, watching the fish swim in and out of a snag. This is where I saw a fish called Tango, one I would love to have in my photo album. The rods were put back on the spots just before dark, and again just after midnight, the same rod resulted in a 24lb mirror. Two more fish followed that morning, and the swim was looking good for a few more bites. As this was a small swim, I rested it for most of the day, and this was to pay off the next morning at

first light when the right hand rod had a few bleeps and then screamed off. After a five-minute fight, I looked into the net and saw a carp I dearly wanted to catch – Tango at 37lb 8oz – what a stunning fish! I rested Tango in the net and set up my self-take camera kit. After slipping Tango back, I also landed a lovely 21lb ghost carp that morning, a fish I saw with Tango a few days before. Then it was time to pack up and head home, one happy angler. I fished South Lake over the next few weeks without a bite.

It was now May; I'd done my first year on South Lake, and what a year with 103 carp landed. As I walked around the lake, a few fish were showing in a swim called the Ladders, so with a few casts with the lead, a spot close to the island and one in the middle of the lake were found. I put two or three Spombs over each spot, and over the next few

nights, eight more carp were landed, four being 20-plus fish.

On my next visit it was my first time to fish the Car Park 1 swim, always a busy swim this one, and it has a lot to fish to. I fished both rods close to the rope, and the fish were all over my spots within hours of casting out. Most of the carp I caught from this swim were high doubles with only one of the six fish caught being over 20lb. On my return I jumped in the Car Park swim again, but this time found a nice spot 30 yards out, and the next morning a lovely 31lb mirror was being photographed. Over the next few nights, I had nine more carp, but still most of them were doubles.

With the gear packed up, I had a walk around the lake, and the swim called Matt's Corner looked good for next time. This swim is very weedy and didn't get fished that much, so a few weeks later I was back, Matt's



28lb.



24lb.

Corner was free, and I could see a few fish swimming in and out of a fallen tree. I had a lead around this spot but could not find a clear spot to put a bait on, so I had to make my own. One hour later, and my spot was made. This spot I made was only 12 yards out and looked good for a few bites over the next few nights. Wow what can I say? With the rod on the spot no more than one hour, it ripped off, and ten minutes later, a 31lb mirror was on my mat. Happy days, and to watch carp feed over that spot for the next few days was great. I caught seven fish from that spot over the next few nights.

I was back again the next week, but Matt's Corner was already taken. I was looking out from a swim called Reeds, and a few fish showed. Wow – this was all I needed to see, and I set up camp. With the rods on the spot, I had my smallest carp to date at 8lb.

The next fish was to be my biggest common from the lake at 33lb, and what a stunning fish.

September now, and I was fishing the house bank now in a swim called Coffee and Scones, a small swim with a lovely left hand margin to fish. All the bites in this swim were first light in the morning, so it was up and ready, and the margin rod was away with a 27lb common and 23lb mirror. Next morning 20lb and 23lb mirrors were caught.

On my last session that year, I fished a swim called the Margins, which had a lot of floating weed to remove before I could fish it. Three hours later and it was time to find two spots, one close in and the other a few yards out. I could see the fish moving over my spots all that day, so I was not surprised with my first fish that morning, a 28lb common. On my last morning, I landed Henrietta for a sec-

ond time at 34lb. Over the next few months, the lake fished really slowly with the bad winter, and the lake froze over a few times.

My first time back was in March, and after looking around the lake, a few were showing in the Nightmare swim. After having a lead around, I found a nice 5ft spot, and around this the spot dropped off to 7ft. My second rod was on a small clear spot close to the island. The next morning, my right hand rod was away and a 24lb common was mine. With the fish in the landing net, a new rig was put back on the spot, but before I photographed the fish, the right hand rod was away again, and this time the fish looked bigger. With only one net, I had to land the fish in my retention sling, which was not the easiest thing to do. This mirror went 29lb 14oz, which just goes to show you – bring two nets if you fish on your own.

Over the next few weeks, I managed nine more carp from that swim. With just two weeks left to fish the South Lake, I was back in the Nightmare and on the fish again, and the next morning I had a 30lb mirror from the right hand spot. As I photographed this fish, my left rod was away, and with no one to help, the 30lb mirror was put back in the sling. Second fish netted, and then the right hand rod was away. I can see why this swim is called the Nightmare now. Three fish – one in the sling and one in each of the nets. I was happy I'd brought two nets this time.

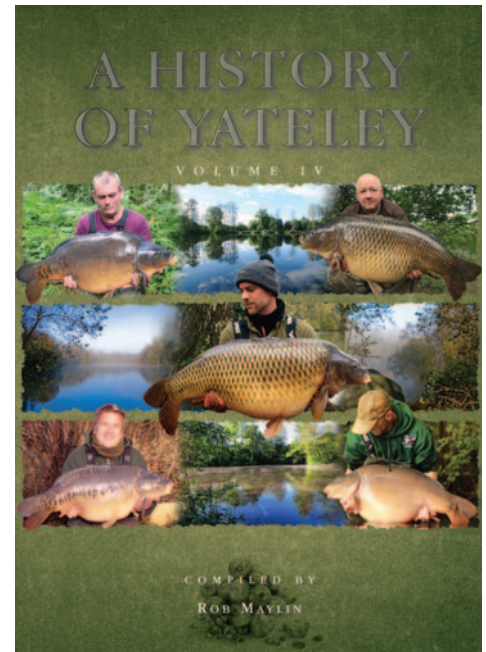
My last session on South Lake was at the end of April. I was lucky to have five nights to fish and was back in the Nightmare swim. Over the next few nights, the temperature was down to zero degrees and not looking good, but I still had a few fish in the morning, so it was not too bad. It was Friday morning and time to pack up, but I was starting to see a lot more fish feeding over my right hand spot, so I

made a phone call to the wife to say I was doing one more night. Rods were back on the spots and I had a good night's sleep with a my phone alarm set for 5am.

I was up before first light, and the right hand bobbin was showing signs of fish over my bait. At 5.15 the bobbin pulled up tight, and I picked up the rod. The fish tried to take me round the boat hut, but luckily for me, it turned, started coming my way and swam under my left hand rod. I passed my rod under that rod and played the fish in open water, but it went back under my rod again. I did manage to pull the fish back this time, and the 20-minute battle was over. As I looked in the net, I could see it was a big common, but could it be the one? Wow! The big common was mine – 39lb 10oz of stunning carp and on my last morning. I called the bailiffs, Kev and Darren, both fishing the lake at the time, to come round and help with the photos. Neither of them could believe I'd had it on my

last morning – I was over the moon.

Available now in the Big Carp Magazine website shop - www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk. ■



27lb.

If it Ain't Broke...

By Steve 'Apache' Cliff

I've been fishing this way for the best part of 20+ years, and nothing really changes in how I angle, albeit a few new liquids and bait items which tickle my fancy. A heavy mix of Krill Active or Manilla depending on the crayfish forms the base of the mix, along with a few large pellets

and some salty maize. I need substantial food items that'll keep the roach at bay on Elstow and leave plenty for the carp to browse on.

Little mesh bags on the hooklink ensure the rig is tangle-proof, and allows the hook bait to stand out like a little cherry on the cake with just a mouthful surrounding it.

The new Spod & Bag Mix has now allowed me to ditch the pre-mixing before sessions, providing the perfect solution to my style of fishing.

Just give it a dip in Pure Hemp Oil and let it soak in and you have, in my eyes, the perfect presentation. ■





One of eighteen stunning Elstow Pit 2 carp that came Steve's way in a mad flurry during the hot temps...

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Also available this month,

Big Carp Issue 327

Miss it and miss out!

The Carp Society. Time for Change

I wrote to Sabrina at the Carp Society today, informing her of my decision to stand down as Chair of the Society. After 6 + years, which I initially intended to last 6 months, the time has come for a welcome break from the many phone calls, endless e-mails, day to day matters and worrying about AGM's, board meetings and the like. I have decided to resign with immediate effect as I know, if I pause for too long I might convince myself not to do so, something which already happened a while ago, and in any event there will never be a convenient time to go.

I'm sure the Society will inform members of my replacement in due course. I will remain as a Director and do everything I can to support the group. I just need to remove myself from the day to day, week by week involvement, simply in the interest of my own family life, personal health and well being.

For my own part I particularly wanted to thank our wonderful employees, Miles, Sabrina, Karl and Lolly for all of their hard work and personal support, and putting up with me! To Simon Crow for his work with Carp Fisher and to those volunteer Directors, Honorary posts, helpers and bailiffs who have supported in running Horseshoe, Farriers and Ashmead. From a 'precarious position' some years ago the Society is now well on its way back to its rightful place in the Angling world, and for that I also have to thank those members who re-joined and have supported us ever since.

To everyone that has helped me personally and us as a group, thank you!

Derek



Paul Whitehouse (shown rifght) is an Angling Trust Ambassador who pays for his membership every year to support our work to promote and protect angling. If you love fishing as much as Paul, join The Angling Trust today. <https://anglingtrust.net/individual-membership/> Support the sport you love amazing member benefits



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Peatmoor Lagoon Pollution Disaster

Hey everyone, hope everyone is well. I don't know if any of you have heard about the disaster, we have had on our lovely park lake, Peatmoor Lagoon, here in Swindon. Tuesday 1st of August we had reports from dog walkers of hundreds of dead fish around the lake.

When we arrived at the lake, the hundreds had turned in to a thousand with thousands more gasping for air. Pike, carp, bream, tench and more, lost in a heart-breaking disaster.

Years and years lost in such a short period. Devastating. The Environment Agency we're quickly on-site taking samples and testing. Confirming a major oxygen crash due to possible pollution. Oxygen levels got down to 8.2 and 2.4 in some places.

Aerators were deployed around the lake with 48hr monitoring. The number of dead fish kept rising and rising over the first 72hr.

A major clean-up of the dead fish from in and around the lake from all members and even the public. We have borrowed aerators, loaned from other fisheries and water pumps. We had members camp at the lake for



eight days straight after the Environment Agency left.

To maintain monitoring topping up generators, feeding what's left of stock and removing any more dead fish. We have set up a go-fund-me page as we need as much help as we can get to be able to restore such a beautiful park lake and restock the years and years that have been lost.

Please if you can help us, please

donate, whether it's £1, £5, £10, or £100, it will all be very much appreciated and very much thanked. Below is the link for go-fund-me links for a few videos Link for Facebook page. Thank you for taking the time to read this.: <https://gofund.me/81b6bcc6> <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZGJp6yU7k/> <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZGJp6PbfS/> <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61550352233521>. ■



Angling Trust and Weihai Julia announce trade partnership to protect the environment

The Angling Trust is delighted to announce that Weihai Julia, one of the world's leading original equipment manufacturers (OEM) supplying carbon fibre products for fishing and water sports, has become our latest Trade Associate partner.

As part of the agreement, Weihai Julia will support the vital work of the Trust to protect waterways and the environment for the benefit of fish and fishing, and efforts to grow fishing in the UK.

Founded in 2008 as a family business, the company designs and delivers exclusively to the most recognised brands in the fishing industry. Italian-owned with its manufacturing base in China, Weihai Julia prides itself on producing high quality products and an excellent development strategy that result in outstanding performances for its customers.

Alberto Solza, Weihai Julia's head of marketing and sales, said the Angling Trust shared the same aims as his company in wanting to protect the environment now and in the future.

"The main reason why we have become Trade Associate members of the Angling Trust is that we want to be the first OEM to support direct actions on the environment and support campaigns to spread fishing in the UK," said Alberto.

"We identified that the Angling Trust is committed to achieving the same aims as Weihai Julia and shares a common goal in protecting the aquatic environment. I would like to see more OEM support angling in the UK as we all have a direct interest in fishing continuing to stay strong."

John Cheyne, Angling Trust's Head of Marketing and Membership, said: "Weihai Julia might not be a



household name in the UK, but they produce high quality products for many of the best known fishing tackle brands around.

"We are delighted that they have joined the Angling Trust as Trade Associate members and I look forward to working with Alberto and the team on our Anglers Against Pollution campaign and other initiatives to protect the environment."

Carbon fibre fishing tackle is one of Weihai Julia's core businesses and has evolved using lighter, stronger, and stiffer materials, even developing custom made formulations. Currently, Weihai Julia are active in pole, carp, match, feeder, trout, and predator fishing. They also produce carbon fibre equipment for windsurfing, sailboating, stand up paddling and wing-foiling. ■



Chris Ball, one of the carp world's great ambassadors

Recently we heard the sad news we never wanted to hear. The Carp world lost one of its greatest ambassadors. Chris Ball passed away peacefully on Monday evening. Although we all knew it was imminent, it didn't lessen the impact of losing not only our president, but a man we all regarded as our friend.

Upon meeting Chris for the first time, it didn't take you long to realise you were in the company of a special person, his whole persona just screamed good guy. He was well spoken, charming, respectful, he just had all the qualities you'd look for in a good guy.

I first met Chris about ten years ago at one of our Sandown shows. Chris had volunteered (as he often did) to be MC and compare for the slideshow and talks at the show. On the Saturday evening of the show, it was traditional for the Carp Society team to go to the Chinese as a way of thank you to everyone who was helping us out at Sandown. This particular year Chris came along, and I was fortunate to be seated next to him. The next 5 hours just blew me away. Now this won't come as a surprise to anyone that knew Chris, but he never stopped talking for the whole 5 hours, give or take a few seconds here and there to get a bit of crispy duck inside him.

There are not many people in this world (certainly not in our Carp world) that you could listen to for 5 hours non-stop, but to be honest if Chris had of gone on for another 5 hours, (which knowing Chris as I got to, wouldn't have been a problem for him) I don't think I'd have ever got bored. Of course, the talk was all Carp, but it wasn't the run of the mill Carp stuff, it was fascinating, and his delivery was only upstaged by his knowledge (and recall). I genuinely don't think I've met anyone who knew as much about anything as Chris knew about Carp and Carp fishing. I remember saying to someone the next day that Chris could go on mastermind and not get a Carp related question wrong if he sat in the chair for 24 hours. He'd start off telling you a story about someone catching a 16lb'r in 1963 and by the time he'd finished that story you'd know the history not only of that fish, but the rod it was caught on and the net it was landed in. His knowledge was,



I'd say, second to none. Like I say, he blew me away that night. I met Chris a few more times during the next few years and he'd always come up to me and ask how the fish in Horseshoe were doing and ask if anyone was having them off the top. Surface fishing, of course, being Chris's main passion.

Following the shake up at the Carp Society in 2015/16 our paths crossed more frequently. Chris was one of the guys who stood up to be counted at the EGM and became more involved in the following years, culminating in him become president, a position I know he was immensely proud of holding. He was also the instigator of turning the lodge here at Horseshoe into a museum for Carp fishing, furnishing it with a variety of objects and memorabilia. It was on one of his visits to Horseshoe that he brought his good friend Len Arbery. Now I mentioned earlier that I thought Chris's knowledge was second to none, that was before I met Len. I'm not saying Len knew more but I bet it was a close thing, but that's neither here nor there, because combined, well, if you knew them, you'll know what they were like together, just phenomenal. They came to Horseshoe together a few times, each time bringing items for the museum and each time they'd run me through the history of each item.

I did manage to sit them down on a couple of occasions and record two episodes with them for our Carp Radio podcast and they didn't disappoint, not at all. Individually they

were both fantastic but together they took it to another level. The friendship, comradery, knowledge, just everything about the pair of them together was class. Again, all I can say is they blew me away. If we can take any comfort from Chris's passing, it's the hope and believe that him and Len are together again.

On a more personal note, my favourite ever fishing related memory is down to Chris. I mentioned earlier about interviewing Chris and Len for the Carp Radio. After one of the interviews Chris casually mentioned I should interview Chris Yates, my first thought was "Yeah, in my dreams". But low and behold Chris (Ball) phoned me a couple of weeks later and said he'd spoken to Chris (Yates) and sorted it for me to go to Chris Yates house and interview him. To me, that was like being granted an audience with the Deli Lama. Unbelievable.

Anyway, the day came for me to set off to Chris Yates House, I was due to meet Chris Ball a mile or so away from Chris Y's house. I don't mind telling you I was nervous as a kitten, all the way down I was saying to myself "Don't say anything stupid, don't say anything stupid". I met up with Chris B and we made our way to Chris Y's house. I think we must have woken Chris Y up because after a couple of knocks on the door Chris Y's head appeared from the upstairs window and said "Hello". He came down and let us in, Chris B introduced me, and Chris Y said "welcome, let me introduce you to Mr Green". Mr Green of

Fishing Show Winter Carp 2023



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course being Chris's first fishing rod (I think, I hope) and probably the most famous fishing rod in history. But what an introduction and what a start.

Chris's house is a little cottage in a lovely little village, his garden was full of growth and inside the house was very warm and homely, and as I sat

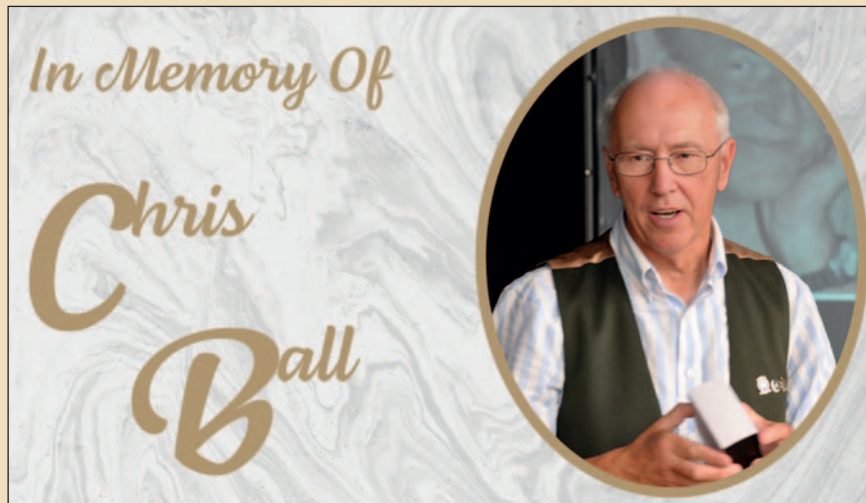
there with them both I couldn't help but feel like I was in the heart of the Shire, it really was quite surreal for me. If you can picture Bilbo, Frodo and Gandalf sat in Bag End, then that's exactly where I was. We were probably more like Compo, Foggy and Gleggy sat in Nora's in reality, but to me we'll always have been in the

Shire. To cut a long story short, the day went amazingly well, it was nothing short of brilliant and an experience I will never ever forget. I thanked Chris B every time I met him afterwards, but I'll never have thanked him enough. Sadly, I'll never get the chance to thank him again, and that saddens me. ■

A tribute to Chris Ball

No matter how long one has been around, confronting sad news and loss is never easy. Chris Ball has been my personal friend since the early 1970's, and today as Chair of the Carp Society, I have to pass on the sad news of his passing, after a short, but difficult battle with Cancer.

The Carp Society has not only lost its President, Carp Fishing and angling in general has lost a great angler, a huge and enthusiastic influencer, writer and angling historian. Most of all the world has lost a lovely person! Over many, many years Chris has been my and many others 'go to person' whenever we wanted an answer to a Carp Fishing question and I doubt anyone will ever quite replace him in that regard. That he always gave time and respect to the questions we all asked is to his eternal credit. He became a huge part of the 'fabric' that holds Carp Fishing past and present together. I know he will always be remembered by the many who knew him and I'm sure I'll not be alone in shedding a tear at his passing. Back in the 1980's when we all used to gather at Dunstable for Carp Society Conferences, until the present times at Sandown and Horsehoe, his influence via Carp Fisher,



Chris Ball with Derek Stritton at Horseshoe Lake event in 2019.

Carp Talk, Carpworld, six books, talks and slide shows, work with the B.C.S.G, Chris has always been there. Memories of him will without doubt be cherished for many years to come.

Thoughts and huge sympathy to his wife Lynne and the family at what is a very sad time for them. Go forward on your journey my friend, and be assured of the huge contribution you have made and the lovely memories you leave with so many of us. God bless and God speed from everyone at the Carp Society.

Derek Stritton.



Chris Ball centre with Derek Stritton, Len Arbery, Kris Ford and Mike Wilson 2018

Chris Ball Triubute – from Tim Paisley

Writing tributes to friends who are no longer with us is a source of mixed feelings: you are flattered to be asked, particularly in the case of someone with so many literate friends as Chris Ball, but sad that such a posthumous reflection has become necessary. When I started assembling some thoughts about Chris it became clear that it was not going to be easy to come up with a condensed version of his life. Where to start? Musician, writer, author, publisher, BCSG and Carp Society stalwart (President of the Carp Society at the time of his death), successful carp angler, floater-fishing guru, in-demand emcee and auctioneer, raconteur, cane connoisseur, 'vintage' tackle collector - and photographer... In the interests of brevity something had to give and I decided to focus on Chris the archivist, and Chris the writer.

On reflection I had known of Chris for as long as I can remember. I had actually known him since 1987 when I met him and Fred J Taylor – and befriended them both - on the same day at a Carp Society conference when Chris was the recipient of the lovely carved, cased, Clarissa carving following his success in the inaugural Society quiz. I launched Carpworl in



Chris Ball and the late Len Arbery.

1988 and Chris became a regular contributor throughout the thirty-plus years of its life. In 1994 Chris, Kevin

Clifford and I joined forces in the launch of the weekly Carp-Talk. It thrived for twenty-four years until it felt the chill of Internet intrusion and fell by the wayside. In its lifetime it had become an institution and unless the world of publishing changes dramatically it will always have the distinction of being the only weekly carp publication in the world. It will almost certainly have the distinction of aspiring to the most editions published by a single carp title – 1231. (A monthly magazine would have to survive for over 100 years to match that statistic!) In 2000 Chris, Kevin and I again joined forces and compiled the book A Century of Carp Fishing, a deadline-threatened project we looked back on with no little pride.

By the time Carp-Talk was launched in 1994 Chris was already an author following the publication of The King Carp Waters (1993). This was followed by Best of the Famous Catches (2012), Historical Carp Waters (2017), Historical Carp Waters II (2020), and the embryonic Ashlea Pool (2023). With his Ashlea book ready to go to the printers at the time of his death as an archivist I guess



Chris Ball introducing Tim Paisley at the 2018 Horseshoe open day.

Chris would not have been unaware that as an author he joins the famous angling carpers of the past who have had books published posthumously, John Norman's *Coarse Fishing With the Experts* (1957) and Derrick Davenport's *Fishing for Life*, 2010.

Add to his published books his contributions to numerous other books and regular magazine articles and it is evident that as the years went by his writing output became increasingly prolific.

Chris the archivist/raconteur was a force of nature. At shows he exuded carp-fishing memories and invariably had a crowd around him listening to his illustrated memories of days of yore.

He could talk authoritatively about historical events, and from personal experience of the early-seventies' BCSG meetings at the Crooked Billet



Chris Ball with Tim Paisley.



Chris in his carp den when I compiled a big interview with him for *Carpworld* some years back.



In 2000 Chris, Kevin Clifford and I joined forces and compiled the book *A Century of Carp Fishing*, an ambitious rush-to-deadline project we looked back on with no little pride.

Chris the angler, archivist and cane-rod buff with a 23lb floater-caught common from Redmire Pool in the late 80s.



Sadly no longer with us; Fred J Taylor, Chris, Brian Mills and Len Arbery on the Carp Society occasion at which I met all four in 1987.

Chris's vintage tackle obsession included his love of significant cane rods. This is the collection at the time of compiling the big interview.



onwards, because he was there, and had a myriad of carp fishing facts and statistics at his fingertips. In my immediate circle Chris and Kevin Clifford were the archivists I turned to on many occasions to scrounge pictures, or check facts. As an author Chris was unusual: in an era when many carp-fishing articles are thinly disguised ego-trips, or based solely on personal experiences, his published work was almost invariably about other people's achievements.

Chris was a personable family man with wife Lynne being a tower of strength throughout his life. I have enjoyed his company down the years, and cherish the memory of the achievements shared with Chris and Kevin Clifford. Chris's contribution to life, and the world of carp fishing has been unforgettable. He has earned his rest, and his prolific writing output will ensure that his memory will live on.

Chris Ball Tribute – from Bill Ward

I first got to know Chris, albeit then fleetingly, when he attended one of the early Horseshoe Junior Carp Schools where he held the youngsters and instructors spellbound on the road bank of Summer Bay with his masterclass of how to tempt and take fish from the surface in his inimitable 'Bally' fashion.

Chris's knowledge of our pastime is legendary, with his books, archive, always entertaining personal appearances, presentations and a very appreciated master of ceremonies at Carp Society Shows, auctions and angling events up and down the country. He reset the bar for how Carp Angling heritage evolved ever since Chris Yates embedded the Redmire expectation and excitement in anglers minds, bringing Carp to the forefront of an anglers quarry along with other like-minded 'Dick Walkers'. As President of the Carp Society Chris will be rightly and fondly remembered for his immense contribution to Angling.

The picture below is from an original, taken by Chris's own hand, and I believe to be his first of a tail-walker, saying as much about him as it does now about him being a free spirit.

Kindest regards, condolences and commiserations to Chris's family and friends. Bill Vice President. ■

Raffle Prize Donations

Hello there my name is Dan Stevens and I was wondering if you may be able to help me in any way.

I fish a small club water in Kent with around 65 members and one of our members daughter has been diagnosed with brain cancer. The family have been paying for her treatment for the last 12 months at £2000 pcm and are now struggling to meet that. I have set up a charity carp match at the club water on the 30th of September and was really hoping for a donation towards the raffle of any sort if possible.

So far, I have confirmed donations from: Julian Cundiff, Big Carp Magazine, Free Line Magazine, Jake @ Solar Tackle, Dan Hawkes Ridgemonkey, Kieran Ryder at One More Cast, Hoggie @ Squirrels Nuts, Kudos

Tackle, Joe at A2 Baits, Josh at Korda, ESP, Ben at Parker Baits, Alfie Willingdale at Nash, Gardner Tackle, The Tackle Box Dartford, Maidstone Angling Centre, Gemini Tackle, Thinking Anglers, Willy's worms, Total Carp Magazine, Linear Fisheries, Go Outdoors, Hinders Bait, Enterprise Tackle, Navitas, Baylys Baits. A few local day ticket waters have donated too.

Extremely cheeky of me but I was really hoping I might be able to add you to the list?

I fully understand you must get inundated with this sort of stuff, but if you don't ask you don't get. There is already a go fund me page set up etc, so I can confirm this is not a scam – if this is something that you may be able to make a small donation.

Many thanks Daniel Stevens ■



CHARLIE KEEN

FUNDRAISER

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<https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/charlie-keen>



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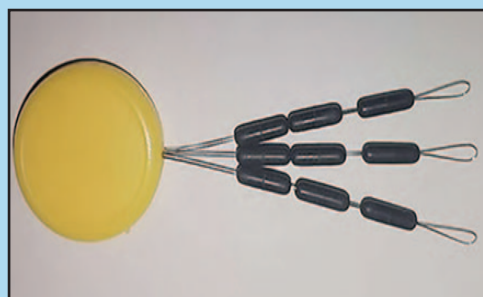
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A few nice fish for team member Tim Thornton from Durleigh res over the last couple of days. Size 4 Scorpion Crank hook in an IQ2 D rigs with DNA baits Bug, SLK, and S7 doing the business. Well done Tim.



This is what we love to see, smiles all round, #moretackleboxlessxbox team member Jo Sargent-Cain out making memories: "It not about the weight but the memories created! Utilising the scorpion Choddy and Curve shank hooks, composite lead clips and micro ring swivels" Well done guys,

Team member Gary Wadsworth took his son recently and bagged this ghosty PB, congratulations! "Thumbs up from the lad for the size 4 scorpion curve shank hooks, braided hooklink and end tackle. All of which landed him 10 fish with this ghostie being his favourite and new PB."

Owner Mark Russell just Landed this banging 23lb common: "I thought my chances had gone as bite time is normally overnight, I fell back to sleep after waking at 7am. At 8:30 my middle rod screamed a tone I hadn't heard for an age! Having to fish with the rod tips up my rod came out of the butt rest, and the reel hit the alarm the take was so hard. It stripped line and took me a few minutes to slow and turn it around. After a hard fight the lead had come off making it a bit easier to clear the weed, I slipped the net under my first Ecton Lakes Clover common and one that hasn't been caught for 5 years! I used our Scorpion Wide Gape hooks in size 4, micro ring swivel, Tungsten Kickers, Hook Bead and our new CTO Pro hooklink in 25lb B/S. Having my daughter with me on her first night made it even more special, oh and it's me wedding anniversary too." Well in Mark.



Team member John Paul McCusker is back out again at Monks Pit and back doing what he does best, catching stunning carp.



Our man, Bruce McCarlie, with some very special catches! Bruce used a variety of our terminal tackle items including the Scorpion Wide Gape and Curved hooks, Tungsten Putty and 2mm Shrink Tubing. We'll done @bruce_mccarlie_angler some scaley bangers there!

Give a little Mora this year...

Mora's Companion Knife is the perfect gift

Brighten any outdoor enthusiast's day with the colourful Companion Stainless Steel Knife from Swedish experts, Mora. A family-run company with more than 125 years of expertise behind it, the Mora Companion Stainless Steel is exactly what it says, a trustworthy, reliable companion for lovers of the great outdoors.

Perfect for all types of outdoor adventurers, the Companion Stainless Steel will undoubtedly become a kit bag essential for bushcrafters, campers, hikers and all other adventurous loved ones.

The powerful blade, which travels down the Companion ¾ of the way, is made from high quality Swedish stainless steel for outstanding durability and longevity.

The 2.5mm thick blade is complemented by a soft-friction grip handle made from TPE rubber, which means the knife feels safe and steady to work with.

To ensure the blade can be stored safely while not in use, the Companion Stainless Steel comes complete with a protective polymer sheath that even features a practical belt clip for keeping the knife close to hand.

Available in a number of bright colours, the Companion Stainless Steel is a versatile knife perfect for many types of outdoor pursuits but the range doesn't stop there.

The Companion range encompasses a number of different models meaning there is a Companion to suit all types of outdoor adventures. A gift set to last for many years to come, treat the outdoor enthusiast in your life with the Companion Stainless Steel.

Find out more about Mora at www.mora.kniv.se. RRP: £15.00. ■

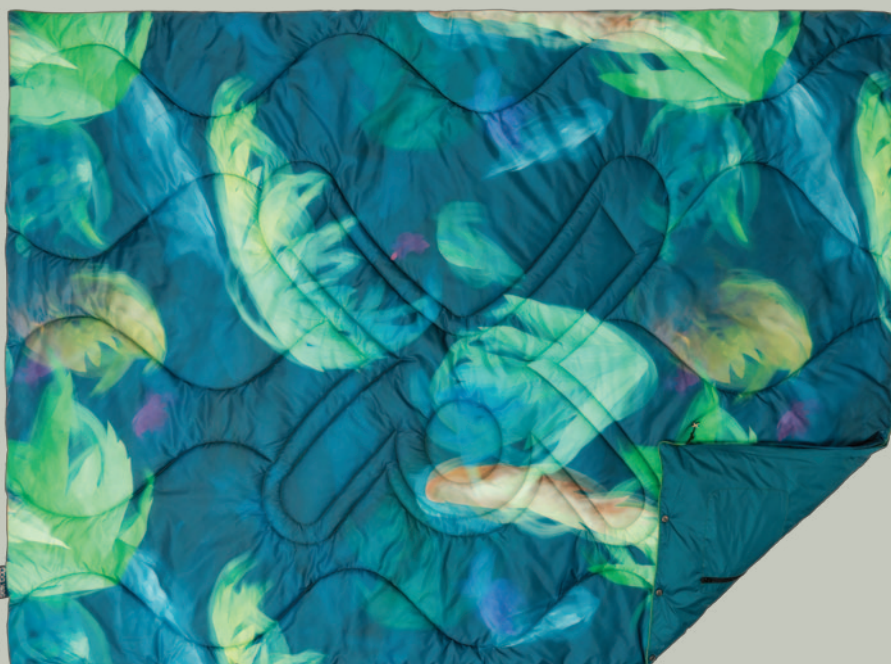


Selk'bag launches new wearable blanket made from 100% recycled materials

Wearable sleeping bag brand Selk'bag has launched a new camping blanket, crafted entirely from 100% post-consumer recycled materials. This extension to the Selk'bag range combines exceptional comfort, versatility, and sustainability, designed as the perfect companion for a wide range of outdoor adventures.

The Selk'bag blanket showcases brand's commitment to reducing environmental impact, without compromising on quality or performance. The shell, insulation, zip, and zip pull are all made from 100% recycled polyester, equivalent to 65 discarded plastic bottles. Selk'bag blankets are free of PFAS, thanks to the absence of a DWR coating, making them safer for users and kinder to the planet. This is the first camping blanket to achieve the OEKO TEX STANDARD 100 certification.

A standout features of the Selk'bag blanket is its versatility. With the ability to convert into a poncho with front



poppers and a handy internal zipped pocket, wearers can enjoy freedom of movement while keeping their hands free. Whether cooking over a campfire or stove, moving around the campsite, or enjoying a beverage under the stars, users can stay warm and snug without sacrificing convenience. The Selk'bag blanket easily packs away into a convenient pillow when folded in on itself, which has two sides to cater for varying temperatures. One side has a 'shaggy' fleece face for optimal cosiness during colder conditions, while the smooth fabric on the other ensures comfort when it is milder.

Machine washable, Selk'bag blankets are made from 100% recycled 30D ripstop polyester fabric, while the insulation is made from 100% recycled 3D hollow fibre siliconized synthetic material (240 gsm), providing excellent warmth. The entire blanket weighs just 0.9kg, making it lightweight and easy to carry. Available in one size, the Selk'bag blanket is available in four nature-inspired designs: 432Hz, Dulces Suenos (Sweet Dreams), Hotel Mil Estrellas (Thousand Stars Hotel), and Senderos (Trails). It retails at £79.95 and is available from www.selkbag.co.uk/products/senderos-blanket. ■



NITE Maverick MEGAN HINE

NITE Maverick MEGAN HINE is no stranger to testing herself in unforgiving environments and therefore was the perfect choice to put the Atlas through its paces as it accompanied her to Malaysia and Panama just months before its launch.

"The Atlas was thrown in the deep end literally as it accompanied me out of the jungles and islands of Malaysia and Panama on a recent location scout for a TV show. In and out of air conditioning and high humidity levels... Bashed on rocks and in and out of salt and fresh water as I measured depths for cliff jumps and explored remote jungle rivers. Not a scratch or any misting up."

As an elite expedition leader, survivalist, and wilderness expert, we're elated with her help for this ultimate watch test.

Megan's latest project is the launch of @psyche_media_solutions, which delivers specialised support and training for media organisations and individuals working across the Globe in remote and extreme wilderness environments.

"When so much of my life is spent on the road, doing this as part of a creative, supportive team is exhilarating, whether solving the logistical complexities of remote shoots or building relationships with local teams. I'm excited by this new endeavour."

Her life is a tapestry woven with daring exploits that surpass physical and mental barriers. And she understands the value of time, not as an abstract concept but as a reminder to seize every moment and embrace the wonders the world has to offer.

Her relentless pursuit of exploration serves as an inspiration for individuals yearning to break free from the shackles of routine and embrace extraordinary experiences.

Megan has proven The Atlas stands the test of the elements and will endure any adventure. © 2023 NITE Watches UK

NITE Watches Unit 14 Silver Business Park,
Airfield Way, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 3TA United Kingdom. ■





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432 Hz



Dulces Sueños



Hotel Mil Estrellas



Senderos

A photograph of a fishing camp. In the foreground, a silver rod pod stands on a dirt path, holding several fishing rods. The rods have camouflage-patterned handles and are positioned horizontally. Behind the rod pod, a dark green tent is set up on a dirt clearing. The tent's interior is visible, showing a camouflage-patterned sleeping bag. To the left of the tent, there is a green bucket and a white container. To the right, another green bucket and a camouflage bag are visible. The background is filled with dense green trees and foliage. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

A Previously Trodden Blackwater Path

Part 2 by George Loughlin

We rejoin George from last month's issue as he continues his campaign in

the Blackwater Valley. Back down the following weekend, I decided that the carp highway near the bridge was going to be a runner to intercept these residents as they confidently swam between the areas of the lake. I observed plenty of fish in the area prior to setting up, and the nearest swim to the bridge was chosen for my ambush. Alas, apart from yet another biblical deluge, the area was devoid of feeding fish. As I later found out, a key holding bush had been removed, and they literally just used the area in transit or stayed safely behind the draping boughs of the weeping willow on the opposite bank, and that was pretty much impenetrable without a boat, which I didn't have in my arsenal at the time. This second session ended up fishless, but nevertheless it was another part of the learning process, and more intelligence gathering was affirmed, which is about building up the knowledge of the venue and its little idiosyncrasies. Time spent on the lake is always of benefit, and whilst carp do not always add to the mix, subconscious learning takes place, and more parts of the jig-saw fall into place.

Back again the following week, and it was quite busy with some of the regulars occupying the same swims for their social activities, so I opted to fish as far away from the madding crowd as I could, opting for swim 3 on the main part of the lake. This was a totally different prospect to the other areas I fished, and the topography of the bottom was made up of distinctive gravel seams interlaced with silt pockets and the start of weedbeds. The depth was between 8-12ft, and I believe one of chaps (Billy) I had spoken to said that there had been several shows around 40 yards out. It seemed like a genuine enough comment but you sometimes have to wonder about being fed these little



(Top) 19lb mirror out of Rogers, a welcome quick bite.

(Middle) 21lb 6oz of hard-fighting common.

(Bottom) 22lb 6oz common after being closed for spawning.



ner to a position further up the lake where they were showing a fair bit. I was not tempted, having arrived at my new home, so I set up camp, armed the carp sticks and sent out the nut mix and candyfloss baits into the zones. I was counting on the banker being the left hand rod, which was in the area of the last shows, and this one had a pink candyfloss chod over about a kilo of scattered 18mm Nutmix. The other rods were fished with a chod rig and a stiff hinged rig made with the ever-reliable size 6 Krank Choddy hooks, which had an additional bit of attention by way of some deft file work.

The evening crept up, and I indulged in my passion for cooking once more, so I broke out the fresh coriander, peppers, onions, chicken breasts, guacamole, salsa and wraps alongside some Firecracker sauce and created some of the finest fajitas east of the Rio Grande. After this shameless gluttony was over and the kitchen/diner area of the bivvy was wiped clean, the serious business of watching the lake resumed in earnest over copious quantities of tea and coffee with the mandatory Rich Tea, Malted Milks or Hobnobs for dunking. The air was noticeably milder, and

(Top) 23lb 6oz two-tone mirror, a welcome capture before the Long Fish.

(Left) 26lb 12oz of one of the hardest fighting mirrors I have caught.

(Below) The Back Bay cut swim.

snippets and their real worth, so I watched for a while, and sure enough and true to his word another couple of carp came out to check out the new chunky monkey in town. That cemented the deal, and the gear was lugged back from the car. I eventually arrived at my swim having pushed the carp porter up a ridiculous slope, round muddy paths, and the balancing act was worthy of inclusion in a circus show.

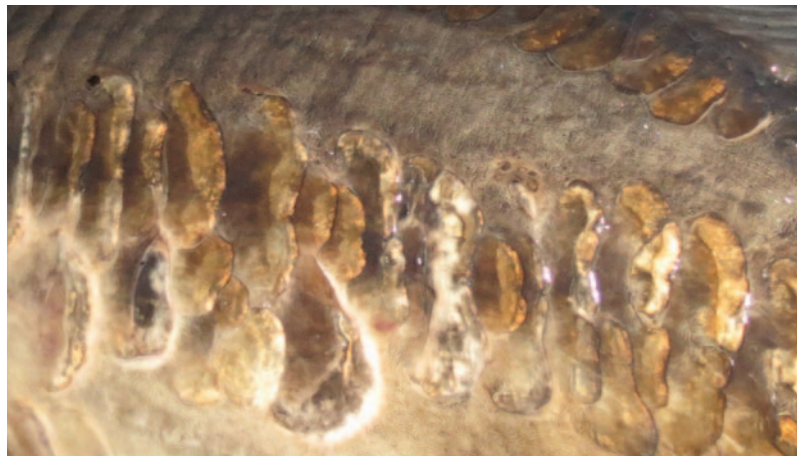
My swim provided an expansive vista over this area of the lake, right up to the channel at the opposite end, which led to a back bay. I was centrally placed in my swim, and the chap that had given me the info had decided on a move from the left cor-



after several hours, there appeared to be more signs of carp activity with their presence being given away at several locations including over my middle and left hand rods. Naturally you want to wait up with the electric anticipation of a take at any moment, but there comes a time to crawl under the covers and let the alarms do the monitoring.

It felt like I had just closed my eyes when I was suddenly aware that the piercing blue LED was flickering under the vibration of line being taken, and after the initial retinal burns subsided from the intense glow, I found myself engaged in a battle of wills with yet another cunning opponent, and I realised that I was in a world of trouble.

The left hand rod was angled past a tree, which was in a semi-fallen position on my left, and the fish obviously knew that if it went further left then the tree would be brought into play. I plunged the tip into the water, hoping



to get the line below the submerged branches. The horrific feel of mono against bark was reverberating along the line, and I was literally wincing in anguish with every passing second. I was literally on my knees with the rod plunged so deep that the tip was touching bottom. I knew the line was now clear, but was it damaged? The fish started to relinquish its position and began heading out to the middle of the lake. I was now upright and fighting this carp standard style.

It was wearing itself out as it came to within around four rod lengths, and then it decided that under the tree was the place to be, so my heart was in my mouth. The branches were grating on the line, but the fish seemed to be on the surface, yet the line angle was weird. Something was seriously wrong, and I didn't fancy a swim in the dark, but every time I pulled on the line, the fish seemed to bounce on the surface, which meant it was over a branch somehow. I locked



up the rod, grabbed the head torch and could see that the line was indeed caught over a branch, which was dead and stripped of bark, so it was smooth. I was trying to work out how to solve this riddle and opted to use the weight of the fish to my

(Top) 26lb Mug Linear.

(Right) I don't put a hook out without some treatment.

(Below left) A proper carpy breakfast.

(Below right) 29lb mirror carp, just prior to slipping and tearing my ankle ligament.





advantage, but bringing it to the point where its full weight was below the branch, hopefully seeing if it would snap the wood or slide off the main part and over to the narrow fronds that were on the ends.

Whether there was some divine intervention or not at that point, miraculously, the branch gave way and broke off cleanly. I grabbed the net to get the fish into before the tangle of the broken bough presented more problems, and the carp was mine! I was pulling away the tangled limb of the tree, and the line parted where it was indeed shredded by the seesawing action as it rubbed over the gnarly bough. I was thankful that my luck held out because what I had

in the net was a substantial chunk of common, which was definitely in the mid 30lb bracket. It was only a short while until daylight so I unhooked her in the net and left her to recover from her epic battle with me.

I noticed that another angler had arrived to my right at some point in the previous evening, so I went down to see him at first light to get some pictures and found him attached to a carp as I entered his swim. We completed his pictures of a feisty little fish on his new camera, and then he came up and repaid the favour with some for me (and some more epic pictures later on in the season). The prehistoric looking old common was a real character with its two-toned right flank

and swirly scales from healed wounds of old. No doubt this carp has seen many anglers come and go over the years, and she bore the scars of many years swimming around this venue, but that just adds character to the sovereign-covered flanks of this old girl. She was truly a worthy capture and weighed a very respectable 33lb 6oz. This was the only fish of that weekend session, but I was ecstatic, having bagged six fish so far and three of them were thirties. This little venue was proving to be rather fruitful and well worth putting up with the M4, M25 and M3 journey after work every Friday afternoon.

The next session saw me tackling an area of the main part of the lake where I had seen fish previously, but without anything solid to go on and with time of the essence as the Friday after-workers started turning up, I thought this swim would be another opportunity to explore the area and see what the fish might like to be in and around, so a bit of markering was done. One pronounced area that I felt might be productive was around 25 yards out to my left, and it was an area where the smooth silt met the bottom of the gravelly margin near some weedbeds that were starting to sprout.

I felt that this may well be a natural highway for them to travel because coming to the middle and right of my swim the topography changed dramatically as the bottom rose up onto a sandy/gravel plateau of around 3.5ft. This was the area where the carp were literally flinging themselves out of the water, and it was obviously an area they liked to frolic in as the afternoon sun was on it until it disappeared behind the opposite bank's treeline. I donned the waders and ventured out on the plateau to see what the land felt like underfoot. Its size was quite a revelation because it was way bigger than I anticipated, and at its furthest extremity, out in the lake with the water kissing the seams at the top of the chesties, it seemed weird to be out there looking as far back as I was to the swim, and if I am honest, a bit unnerving as well.

After a quick prod around and



(Top) Island 3 swim sunset.
(Left) 29lb mirror caught from the Willow swim snag.



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mentally establishing the edge where the plateau drops away again out in front, I carefully retraced my steps back to the bank and gathered my baited rod and free offerings ready to place the trap by hand. As this was a clean bottom, the right hand rod was baited with a Korda Longshank blow-back rig, which had an 18mm Nutmix boilie trimmed down to a barrel and tipped with some plastic corn over about half a kilo of chops and crumb with some corn in the mix as well. The left rod was placed on my "gravel meets silt" spot and baited with more chops and crumb. This had a chod ready and waiting for some unsuspecting cypry that happened to cross it. The middle rod was baited with another chod and launched out into the smoother feeling silt at around 50 yards. This received a light scattering of around 40 baits, and I was officially fishing.

That evening I had planned a hearty feast of chili con carne with a coriander infused rice and some tortillas all prepared on the bank with the finest fresh ingredients, as sitting



out in the wilderness eating hearty fare is simply wonderful. I love spending dusk in the bank side bistro with the heady aroma of a smoky blend of spices and garlic sizzling in the pan, as they impart their flavour in to the fresh mince, peppers, onions, tomatoes and kidney beans. The simmering pan of culinary delights was going to achieve its pinnacle of flavour excellence in about 20 minutes, and with a final few splashes of Worcestershire sauce and the addition of some good quality dark chocolate, my mouth-watering was near to being satiated. The basmati rice was almost ready, as the water had been absorbed, so that left only the addition of a generous amount of freshly chopped coriander, which literally

comes to life with the heat of the rice releasing all of its citrusy flavour. I kid you not, this was better than any of that Chiquitos rubbish; this was hearty cuisine for the discerning carp angler's palette when "roughing it" on the lake.

I sat back on comfy chair looking out over the lake as the bird life quietened down, and my neighbour from two swims down came up for a late chat as I was thinking how peaceful this was. I was at the stage where I had mentally switched off during the conversation and was hoping that my newfound friend would run out of steam soon, but alas the inane drivel knew no bounds. I was trapped in this surreal world where this sound was penetrating my inner ear and my



(Top left) 24lb 12oz of scaly bar of gold.

(Top right) Island 3 – looking back at carp camp.

(Right) On the bank.



brain was willing me to have a kind of anti-social Tourette's outburst, but I was fighting to keep things civil. Eventually my new best friend decided that he needed to be back in his swim and left me to relax with my full belly and a cup of coffee, and only then did the latter part of the evening pass with a calm serenity to the

soothing musical tones from some classic FM.

The weather was very mild, and I slept well under just a thermal bed-chair cover, but I never seem to be able to get more than about four hours' sleep at the lake without the need for a bladder emptying. I was up in the early hours, and I could hear the

odd carp crashing out in the extreme left corner of the lake, but I was not overly confident at this point because it would seem that the carp had moved to a new play area in their arena.

I must confess that as the years have passed, I have become less inclined to move on a whim and certainly not at silly o'clock in the morning. The carp are very mobile here, and although they were 150-160 yards away, they would be circuiting the lake and would be in the zones I had settled on at some point. I decided to let them carry on with their frivolity, and my bed beckoned once again. It wasn't long before I was back in the land of nod and snoring like a hibernating grizzly (so I have been told).

In what seemed to be a nanosecond after I closed my eyes, I was yanked from my slumber with the lower tone of the middle alarm sig-

**(Top) Double stoves on the go.
(Below) 36lb 7oz Slate Grey.**





**(Above) 42lb 12oz common.
(Below) Kia, my carp dog.**

nalling a fast take on my chod in the silt, and I was deftly slipping into my Crocs and heading out to the carp sticks to connect with my adversary. The battle commenced, and the initial run was powerful and purposeful as the unseen behemoth gave a good account of itself in a futile attempt to regain its liberty. I was definitely firmly attached to this one, and once again the Krank Choddy hooks were coming into their own. This carp was really testing my resolve, and the rod was on full battle curve as inch by inch, I gained ground and edged it ever closer to the net. The light levels were good enough to see what was going on in the lake, and my fellow anglers were not yet surfacing from their khaki abodes, so this battle of wills was playing out to a one-man audience: me, the angler.

The carp began to tire, and it was a case of just guiding it between the other two lines, and with the right hand rod removed from the rest and placed as far to the right as I could, the net was extended. The final

throes of the fight were played out without any drama, and the telltale scales of a good common were observed as the carp broke the surface and was guided over the cord of the waiting net. I was ever so pleased with the outcome of that fight and capture and left my prize in the net in the edge whilst I readied the post capture paraphernalia. Then as I turned around, my neighbour had appeared from the left and offered to do the pictures. Now I had only met this fella the day before, but like a lot of individuals, when you ask them if

they are OK with a camera, you invariably get two responses: "Yeah, mate. I am to photography what Usain Bolt is to the 100 metres"...fair enough... or, you are then faced with a look of sheer terror as you pull a technological marvel with a lens so powerful that it is able to see the rivets on the wings of passing planes at 37000 feet. My carpy buddy was ever so slightly in the first category and began to regale me with tales of his photographic prowess, and I felt that I was about to be treated to another round of somewhat embellished





anecdotes. After he had a quick peer in the net, his excitement was a pleasing sight. I then ventured over to have a better look myself, and I instantly recognised this distinctive old two-tone common (33lb 2oz) as the same fish that I had caught on the previous session from a swim 90 degrees to my left.

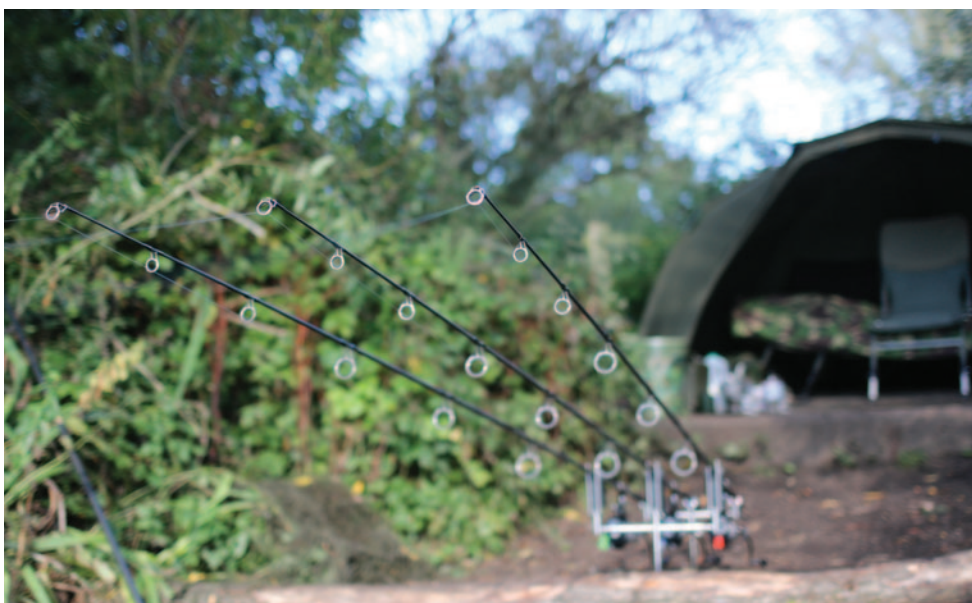
The remit for this capture's photography was to try out my new custom made waders for the man with the more "robust" physique and get some water shots. The famous brands were just not suitable, as it appears that they are only able to accommodate my width as long as I am 7ft 2ins, which suggests I am just short for my weight.

Anyway, without prolonging the agony, the camera was "not what I am used to" or "I usually have it on a mode which is not here" etc, etc, so the water shots were not quite as tickety-boo as I would have liked, but I had great pictures from before, so I opted to release my old Jurassic common back into its watery abode. I was gracious in thanking my "photographer" for his efforts and made my excuses to get some rigs made and the rod back out there, so when he left, I was left to ponder my decision to entrust my prize pictures to my new pal, Walter Mitty. I was happy to have caught a low thirty common, and you can't choose the captures, but I was slightly disappointed that it wasn't a different one. But that's fishing for you, and the season was still young.

The day was just starting, and there were a lot of patches of fizzing during the morning. My confidence was high as this spring morning developed.

The swim I was in was very secluded and comfortable and afforded an epic panorama over the water in my control. The fresh scent of morning filled my nostrils as another carp gave its presence away. The day was one of those halcyon moments when you are just privileged to be here, and the pinnacle of the morning was watching the turquoise flash of at least two pairs of kingfishers as they cavorted in a feathered, aerial dance in front of me.

(Top) 24lb 12oz scaly carving mirror.
(Middle) 24lb 12oz scaly carving of mirror carp.
(Bottom) Island 1 swim.





With their appearance adding a bit of tropical colour to the budding flora, it really was a great moment. I even readied the camera and tripod hoping they would land on my carp sticks and I could get that hallowed shot, but alas, it was not to be, so the quest continues to capture the carpiest of angling shots.

The rest of the day passed without

event, and it was time to get the spots ready to rock for the next overnight offensive. I was happy with the first night's spots and even though the rod that went off was a silt chuck with a scattering of bait, they were obviously drawn to the Kodapop candyfloss hookbaits, so I was happy to put that out again. The left hand spot was primed with some 4mm halibut pellets juiced up with some KO Baits Haulin' Oil, crushed nut mix boilie crumb and chops. This rod was primed with another chod rig, and the right hand rod was moved from its hand-placed spot to one just over the edge of the plateau in the deeper water of around 8ft, again with a long-shank blowback rig with a trimmed boilie tipped with corn. I have great confidence in this Nutmix bait, and they seem to like it, so we would see what the night brings.

The onset of evening means it's time to get my sizzle on once again, and the bankside bistro is opened up and more creative gastronomy was afoot. There is something quite wonderful cooking and eating hearty fare alfresco, the only downside being the washing up and not having my darling wife on tap to take care of the

aftermath, as she does at home. Now before everyone starts getting all "Well, that's not fair; your wife is not a slave to do all your washing up" the fact is that I do 99.9% of the cooking in my house, so the trade-off is that I generally leave the kitchen looking like a hurricane has hit and she washes up, so it works. With the swim tidied and my OCD satiated, I eased into the evening and eagerly awaited the arrival of a hungry old cypry. My neighbour left me alone, so with the radio on low I lay on my bedchair watching the daylight give way to darkness, with the only discernible sound coming from the occasional owl.

I must have drifted off because I was awoken by a short burst of half a dozen bleeps from the left rod, and with imminent retinal burns from the intense blue LED, I tried to focus my eyes on the bobbin, which appeared to have pulled up. After going over to monitor the bobbin and willing it to be yanked into the alarm, I reset it and put it down to a liner, but it was encouraging to have activity because

(Top left) Jag sharp Korda wide gape.
(Bottom left) Loving the new luggage!
(Below right) Kudos Tackle bespoke old skools.





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it means that something was in the vicinity. The morning was not far away, and in what seemed like only a few minutes later, the left hand alarm was indeed going into meltdown as a take on the rod was indicating a blistering run. I was on it in a nanosecond, and straight away the fish was pulling like an express train, flat-rod-ding me as I gently eased off the clutch and returned some order to this frenetic hook up. After several minutes I was beginning to get the better of my capable adversary, but just as I thought the net was going to be required, the carp tore off to my left very close to the bank under the overhanging branches.

Now I knew that it was deep under there, as I nearly managed to fill my chesties up whilst teasing some unnecessary branches out of harm's way, but what I didn't know was what exactly was hidden beneath the canopy of the listing tree. I plunged



the rod tip under the surface and slowly tightened the clutch in an attempt to turn the feisty carp, and it seemed that the carp gods were with me because it started to come back to me, albeit under the tree branches. When it was clear, my neighbour had seen what was going on and was by my side ready to net this chunk. She went in first time, and I was eager to see what we had. I was pleasantly surprised at the sight that greeted me.

I now had a really good common in the net and estimated it to be at least a mid-thirty. Well, up on the scales she went 36lb 7oz and was a real odd shaped character fish known as the Slate Grey. I'm not really sure where the name originated, but it was my first named A-Team member and a really pleasing capture. I was really happy with that session, and with a 33lb and 36lb common, who wouldn't be? Roll on next weekend.

(Top) The Willow swim.
(Below) 30lb The Pig, a proper old warrior.





**(Above) 35lb 8oz common.
(Right) Match Lake weed.**

My beard toting pal Ben Jones had done well out of a swim called the Willow, and it was always very popular, as the local swim pirates followed him round the venue and pumped him for knowledge on tactics and bait. I turned up in mid-May and saw a lot of fish in the Match Lake, and that swim was free. It had received a lot of pressure but seemed to be a consistent swim due to the shelter and protection it offered the carp. I decided it would be a good place for this weekend's adventure to unfold. The swim gets its name from the large willow tree on the right hand side of it, and beyond the trailing tendrils, which delicately skimmed the surface of the water, there was a network of tree branches and roots from the other arboreal neighbours.

Behind this snaggy network of branches was the clear haven where carp could be seen pretty much all the time. This was going to be jungle fishing, so locked-up reel clutches

were the order of the day. All of the rods were placed on margin spots, and the boat was used to place them very close to the snags in selected natural inlets well spread about. The fish were in and out of the area all evening, and their humpbacks were breaking the surface of the mirror-like veneer on the lake. I had the butts very close to the bedchair and was confident of being on them in a flash should a carp slip up. I had fond memories of fishing this swim many moons ago when I was fortunate to get a spring ticket, and I like the way you are enveloped in foliage and tucked away in a corner.

The warmth of the day was beginning to subside, and as the sun was setting behind my shelter, the bank-side bistro kitchen was opened up, and I set about cooking a magnificent chili con carne (with the addition of some good quality dark chocolate – try it) with fresh coriander infused rice. The aroma whilst cooking merely heightened the anticipation, and it was well worth the wait, for it was truly an orgasm on the palette. The evening passed without so much as a



bleep, but I was up early, the sun climbed its steady arc, and its early morning warmth caused a floating mist across the lake. We all strive to capture these brief moments in time on camera for posterity, but really they are but glossy imagery to others, and their true value only really holds a special place in the hearts of the angler/photographer, for it is these images that are the memory triggers for the session, whether productive or not in the capture sense.

I just happened to be miles away in thought, watching the swirling mist dissipate as the solar energy burned through the cold of early morn when the right hand rod went into full battle curve as it was locked on the rests. I was on it in a nanosecond, and the clutch was locked up, so I plunged the tip beneath the surface as a ferociously powerful carp was doing a good impression of a whale as its enormity kept pulling and pulling at the rod, almost dragging me off balance. I couldn't relinquish any line due to what lies to my right, but this fish was seriously testing my tackle to the limits. I desperately entered my chesties and tried to get them up over my ample physique so that I could get in the lake for a better angle, and then



all the movement tapered off to a feint nudge as the carp had clearly got to the sanctuary of the branches under the surface. I was up to the opening of the chesties and tried every conceivable angle available to me to get this carp out, but to no avail. I needed a rethink, so the rod was placed on the rests with tension still on the line, and I left it to see if it came out under its own volition.

Alas, it was having none of it, so the rod and landing net were passed around the substantial trunk of the

**(Above) Swim 10.
(Below) 33lb 6oz Lumpy Two-Tone Common.**

willow, and I edged ever closer to the point where the line was entering the branches, hopefully where my prize was waiting to be scooped. As I narrowed the gap and rapidly ran out of safe ground underfoot, I was deep into the right hand side of the swim amongst years of vegetative detritus and all manner of twigs, branches and weed, none of which were seen with the Polaroids. The fish was still on,





33lb 2oz Lumpy Common – second time in a fortnight.

and I was at full stretch with the net but still about 3-4ft away. The fish stated to move, so I hoped that the carp gods would smile on me and let me claim my prize, as I had shown how keen I was. Teetering on the brink of submersion if I took so much as an inch more, I need to haul this as yet unseen beast to me. Within a blink of an eye, all hell broke loose as the surface boiled, and I saw the carp, which was easily an upper thirty mirror. I was now only 10ft away at most, but something wasn't right!

My pulling was taking the carp away from me, so it became clear that the line was caught behind a branch at the rear of the fish and it had gone around it. The fish was on the surface, exhausted from what must have been 20 minutes of battling with me and the underwater obstacles, and I couldn't get it. My thoughts had now turned to getting back to terra firma and getting my kit off for a swim, but I am always nervous of entering the

water with unseen dangers and dismissed my momentary mad thoughts of getting all heroic. Unfortunately, after the fish had recovered enough on the surface, it decided to make another bid for freedom and headed into the jungle once more. With the flick of its tail (and obviously some assistance with some unseen helper with forceps) it managed to plant the hook in a branch and was gone! How the hell they manage this Houdini-like escapology is a mystery, but nevertheless it wasn't tethered unseen, which is always a good thing. Snag fishing will always come with the odd casualty. It's not irresponsible if you do everything correctly, it is another string to your bow, but you have to have the right gear and some idea, but on this occasion it just wasn't meant to be.

After pulling for the break and retrieving my slightly opened hook, feeling deflated and using one or two expletives, I trudged back through the muck and set about rearming the rod after stripping some line off that may have been compromised. All

three rods were back on the money with fresh baits and the spots primed once more. It was 09:00, and the sun was warming my little corner of the pond quite nicely when the right hand rod was away again. I had my socks off, got into the Crocs and straight in to the water, and this time the carp was out of the mayhem. It battled hard, but I remained resolute and didn't relinquish any line to this chunk. Once it was out of danger and having got the net ready, she eventually slipped over the cord, and I walked back out of the water.

Well that was the plan, but unfortunately the Crocs, bare feet and water were not a great combination, and not being the lightest of individuals meant that as soon as my left ankle rolled in the margin, I went down like one of Fred Dibnah's chimneys. I was now lying on my side in the margin with a chunk in the net. My rod luckily remained intact during the tumble, but the pain that I was experiencing in my left ankle suggested to me that it was not only broken, but very badly broken. I was in a world of trouble and barely clambered up the bank to call my mate Ben to help. He was in the main lake at bite time and would need to leave his gear unattended, but fair play to him, he reeled in and was on his way. In the meantime, a chap opposite me, Craig, saw I was in trouble, and as he was packing up, he came over to assist.

I was in absolutely excruciating pain, but thanks to the efforts of my mates, I did manage to get some great pictures of this wide, dumpy 29lb mirror, and they even talked me into some water shots as I hobbled into the lake in my chesties with them passing me the retainer. This injury plagued me over the next four months, and every step I took was a painful reminder of my tumble that morning. It wasn't broken, but I had torn the ligament very badly. Just soldiering on without any treatment did me no favours at all, and my wife took great delight in reminding of that... every single day!

That's all we have this month, but join us next issue when George continues his campaign in the Blackwater Valley. ■

The First of Many

By Adam Johnston



Way back in the September of 2014, I was fortunate enough to move from

the wet, cold and windy northwest down to the slightly warmer Winchester to begin university at Sparsholt. With this being planned for many years, as long as I obtained the grades in college, I had planned ahead and placed my name on the waiting list for a ticket on Yateley's infamous Car Park Lake. It was during the winter of 2014 when I received a call from a good friend, who had also put his name down at the same time, to ask me if I'd had my offer through, as he had received his that morning. An excited check of my email, and it appeared my luck was in. A quick phone call, and the card was pulled reluctantly from my tightly clamped northerner's dusty wallet. I was all set for the coming April on the lake I had spent over a decade dreaming and obsessing about.

The first of April found me flying down to the lake for my first look and first night pursuing the country's finest, the fish I wanted, the Baby Orange, the final original, a creature that captured my imagination, as it had done with many others before. That first session I was struggling to keep my feet on the ground. I was sure I was going to haul them! I didn't have any carp that session, but I was



convinced that next week I would have one. A week passed, and I was once again sailing up the M3 Yateley bound. I turned up to a fairly busy lake, and after walking round a few times, I decided I would go into the Islands swim.

However, still unsure, I did another lap before I got the gear. On this lap, I stopped to chat with another guy who had woken up. I ended up sat in his swim until about 7am, drinking tea and chewing the fat about the lake. During this time, I noticed huge amounts of tench rolling in front of him, which got me thinking. This was the only activity I had seen on the lake, and I felt sure the carp would not be far from the shoals of the increasingly lively tench. After an obvious

question of, "When are you off, mate?" a plan was formulated. I would do the night in the Islands, and if nothing happened I would move when he pulled off in the morning, dropping in behind him in the Bars. Sure enough, another good night's sleep was had whilst in the Islands with the Nevilles not bleeping once, never mind singing their war cry. Once vacated, I made the move to the Bars. I spent two further nights in this swim before I had to leave with just one tench to show for my efforts.

Shortly after this session, the worst news I could imagine came in. The fish I was after, the Baby Orange, had passed. It was at this time I decided I was done on the lake. However, as I was fairly poor, having been living the student life, I would not be able to buy a ticket anywhere else. After a few weeks of sulking, I decided I would stick at it on the Car Park, as some of the new fish were gorgeous. So that was it – back to the plan. Yateley would be having it! And have it, it did – 40 more nights through till March, but no matter how hard I tried, I managed to blank.

This brings us to when it finally happened! It was the third week of March, and my last session of the season before my ticket rolled over. This was it – last chance saloon – my chance to save a full blank season. A large low-pressure front was moving in, and even better, a few fish had started coming out after the bleak and slow winter. The plan was set. I was helping the guys from Yateley Angling Centre with a junior fishing day, and it would be rude not to do a few nights on the Car Park whilst



in the area. I had come with the plan to fish maggots, but only had a gallon frozen. A quick look in the bank account showed a rather low balance, so that would have to do. Fortunately enough, after the day's coaching a large amount of maggot was left over, so I asked the question, and thankfully Charlie let me have them. This was it! I was going to catch one. A huge bed of maggots just as they were waking from their winter slumber – how could I go wrong?

I got to the lake just as the heavens opened. After donning the waterproofs, I quickly made my way up the lake to have a chat with Dave who was fishing in the End Works. The weather was horrific, and the fishing had apparently not been up to much either, but after much deliberation and tea, a plan was made. Looking on my phone it was apparent the weather was changing, and through the night it was supposed to warm up and stop raining with a new wind beginning to push into the south bank. With nothing else to go on, I

decided on one of the only swims that I hadn't fished during the year: Dessie's. I loaded the barrow, making sure my two buckets of maggots were secure, and made my way round to the swim. I had an idea of the spots in the swim, but as I mentioned, I had never fished it, so after thrashing the water to a foam, I found the infamous Dessie Long Spot.

The light was now fading fast, so I quickly sorted the rods and got them positioned on the spot. Both went out perfectly, and the crack of gravel buzzed through the carbon. It was now dark, so rather than rushing, I thought I would get the brolly up before I filled it in with a few gallons of the red wrigglers.

Once all set up, I began my Spombing assault. After half an hour, I was done, and I got myself into the brolly to dry out with a nice warm tea in my hand. That night I went to bed very confident, but after well over 100 casts in the swim I was not expecting to latch into one until my second morning. Due to this, and after a hec-

tic week, no alarm was set for my first morning. I slept like a log that night, but woke unusually early at 6am, just as the light was beginning to ease its way through the inky gloom.

I lay in the bed gazing out on to the rods for about half an hour when the tip began to periodically flicker on the right hand rod. This persisted for about five minutes, so very expectant of a take, I got up and made a cup of tea. Within seconds of raising the mug to my mouth, the bobbin cracked up and sat against the blank. Tench, I thought. Without taking my eyes from the quivering bobbin, I took a large gulp of my tea, hoping it would fall off. It became apparent it would not, so I began to pop my boots on, when all of a sudden the rod tip raised through the water and the clutch began to fizz violently as yards of line poured from the spool.

Quickly, I stumbled to the rod and lifted into something that felt very untenchlike indeed. It was a carp and a very angry one at that. As realisation set in and I got my act together, all



went solid. The fish had found a large rotting weedbed just to my right, but after some steady pressure I got it moving again. A long hard fight ensued with the fish weeding me once more, followed by a lot of deep, plodding in the margins. Finally, a small head popped up and kissed the spreader block. The rod dropped as my fist punched up to the gods and an eruption of 43 nights of pent-up tension came out in a booming shrill. "COME ON! FINALLY!" echoed through the thick, damp early morning air. I could not believe it.

I secured the net and quickly jumped on the phone in search of a photographer. It was only while chatting to one of the lads to see when he could get down to do the photos that it became apparent. I thought I should really check which one it was and how big it was. With a photographer sorted and en route I knelt on the platform and parted the mesh. I stared down, and my prize stared back. I could not believe it. I had caught my first Yateley carp. The fish

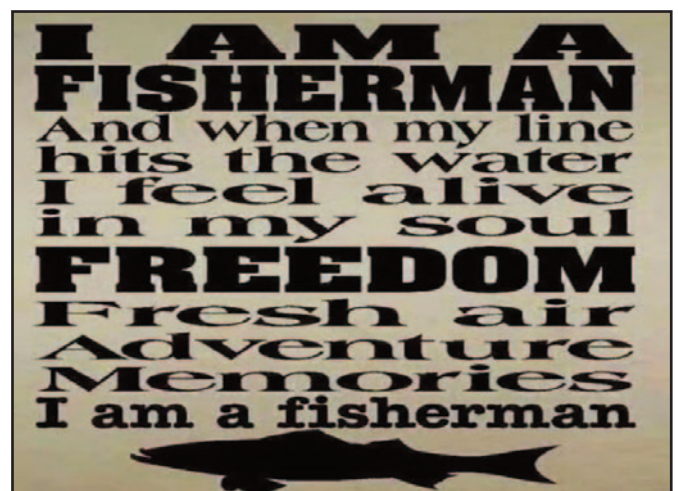
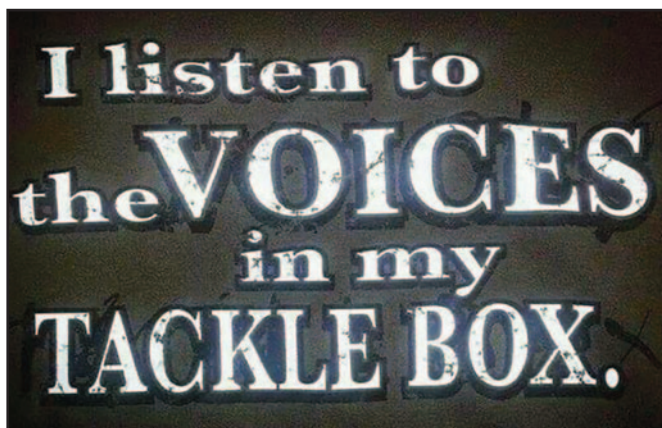
was lifted to the mat, and my size six wide gape was slipped from its lip. On the scales it went 33lb, a new PB. As the camera clicked, a memory that will stay with me forever was captured.

Hundreds of kilos of bait, thousands

of hours and tens of thousands of miles on the car, and it had finally happened. So that's the story of my first Yateley carp, and as I sit here writing this on my tenth night of the new year, let's hope it was the first of many. ■



Carpy Humour



World Carp Masters 2016

By Adam Penning

I'd been aware of the World Carp Masters since the inaugural event in 2015. There has been some conversation in the angling world about this new event, but it is important to point out that this match isn't designed to compete with the long standing World Carp Classic. There is plenty of room and a lot of demand for two events, and beyond that, the Masters was conceived to create something that offered more while taking international match fishing to a new destination.

The organiser and the man with the vision and drive to give the carp angling world the kind of match it deserves is long time carp angler, Steve Bond. Ultimately, Steve has a dream of the event evolving into something like the Grand Prix; all the pomp and circumstance plus the excitement and high-level competition that a global, prestigious event should offer. One of the key attractions of the event was that the winners would receive a cash prize of £25,000, making it a very serious affair indeed and sure to attract competitors from far and wide. The total prize fund was enormous with an amazing array of tackle and some hand carved, solid wood carp that really were desirable and unique.



Steve invited me along to assist with the media side of things. My primary role being to interview the competing teams and to try to convey the atmosphere of the event as it unfolded.

The venue is one of the things that makes the Masters so special and so unique. Many of you will have heard of Lac du Der (Chantecoq), which was originally brought to the attention of British anglers through the exploits of Kevin Maddocks et al, who made the famous 'Ton Up' videos some thirty years ago.

Although I'd heard of the place, nothing prepared me for the actual

scale of it. Chantecoq is one of the largest manmade reservoirs in Europe! Dug to accommodate the floodwater from the mighty River Marne and also as a water supply for the Parisians (it is a lot of water for a city famed as home to millions of soap dodgers!). The circumference of the lake is a staggering 47 miles, and the

(Top) Interviewing the Polish Captain as they began to build a solid lead.

(Below left) Dutch Captain, Gus with a lovely common.

(Below right) Steve Bond and Adam Penning.



furthest that we could measure in a straight line across the water was 4.7 miles! Now I don't know how many 'wraps' that is, but it is a blooming long way!

As an angling destination that represents a formidable adversary, and to try and stage a carp fishing match on it could be, you might suggest, more than a little ambitious.

The logistics of such a project are daunting to say the least, and to tackle this, Steve assembled a team of very reliable and highly motivated people. This team had two nerve centres: the catering run by the unstoppable Sandy Bond and the media, which was overseen by the tireless Paul Blake. To see the effort and the commitment that the team put into making the event run was nothing short of inspirational, and for the most part the match ran very smoothly indeed. When you think about having 116 anglers spread across an area as big as Chantecoq, this was an amazing achievement.

Considering the size of the lake, it does hold an enormous biomass of fish, and whether it is perch, pike, carp or catfish, they all grow to monstrous sizes! The largest carp ever caught is a common weighing 44kg (96lbs), which was landed in 2015. This particular carp is an incredible creature, which some think could go on to be a world record in the future. There are also many fish over the magical 25kg mark, and it is important to remember that these fish have grown to such massive weights on a largely natural diet. Chantecoq carp have rightly been rightly revered by big fish anglers for a very long time and are not 'fois gras' footballs.

There were a total of 58 pairs registered to fish, and these hailed from no



less than thirteen different countries including South Africa and the USA. The UK was very well represented with 14 pairs, including a team representing the very worthwhile veteran's charity, Fishability UK, and it was an honour to interview retired servicemen Bones, Ross and Peter.

The northern contingent are always good value, and it was also

great to spend time with the Scouse pairing of Jon Scoffield and Tommy McKeown. Their capture of a big common on the evening of my birthday was something very special, and we all took great pleasure in sharing the moment with them.

Each team competed in a designated section, and it was encouraging to see the event so well supported from the trade sponsors who included Avid, Pro Line, Urban Bait and Pro Logic.

There was plenty of fun to be had with the pre-match events, which included an opportunity to enter the Guinness Record books with a fully ratified casting competition and the World's Strongest Angler. Both events proved tremendously popular and were very entertaining to watch!

(Top) Peter Hutting, his wife and team share the moment with a big, two tone common.
(Above) Cesar and Cristian all the way from the USA – great lads!
(Left) The South Africans with the biggest fish of the match at 26kg.





As expected, the match started fairly slowly. This was actually an advantage to the logistical nerve centre that the media team occupied, as it allowed us to adjust to our enormous surroundings and figure out the map! Before long though, the walkie-talkies were buzzing with incoming reports from the groups of marshalls who were strategically positioned in each section around the lake.

As the lake is a highly protected nature and preservation site, the organisers were limited to 60 pairs. This was an increase on 2015, and with the ongoing cooperation between Steve and the local community, this is set to increase each year as more access is granted. The event brings a lot to the area, and it is

(Top left) Probably the best looking fish in the lake – wow!
(Top right) It was a very convincing Polish victory – well done lads!
(Bottom left) South African Captain Charles holds his immense carp for the cameras and gets a team soaking!
(Bottom right) Section win for another very talented South African team – they always do well.



beginning to be embraced by the local populace, which bodes very well for the future.

The match was won by a highly capable Polish pair, and, I should say, won comfortably too! Krzysztof Mroz and Leszek Rutecki fished in the Pro Line section from the very picturesque peg 48 where they amassed a huge haul of 30 fish for a total of 315kg. It really was a superb performance, and the team milked their swim for every bite that was out there. They'd built a pretty much unassailable lead early on and held onto it well.

Second place went to the ever-competitive South Africans who always perform so strongly at these events. Charles Horlick and Hendrik Steyn successfully landed nine fish for over 120kg from the Pro Logic section situated in the open expanse of the northern basin. I was fortunate to spend a fair bit of time in the company of these lads, and, ably assisted by their runner, the wonderfully cordial Deanen, they really made an impression on me. There is something redoubtable about the South African spirit; they ooze positivity and seem

utterly indomitable. These lads are a collective force of nature, and I am sure we will be seeing a lot more of them in future events. (Incidentally, Hendrik won the Toughest carp angler event while Charles caught the biggest fish in the match!)

It was testament to the venue and the anglers that almost 70% of the competing field caught fish. Given the size of the place, I found that statistic to be quite incredible.

A special mention needs to be given to the marshalls who really are the backbone of the event. Being on call 24/7 for the entire duration of the five-day event is a considerable task, and for some sections it was pretty much nonstop. How they managed it, I have no idea!

Talking of the South Africans, it has just been announced that there will now be qualifying events in that country as there already are in Poland and other European countries. There is no doubt that the WCM is going from strength to strength, and with the driving force of Steve Bond and his team behind it, I have no doubt it will be around for a very long time to come. Here's to 2017! ■





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A Father's Request

By Mark Quinn

I scanned the shelf in the newsagents for the fishing section, and there it was staring back at me in all its glory – Big Carp Magazine – and on the front cover “Essex’s Best Kept Secret Uncovered”, my very first article in print. I was shaking with excitement and grabbed every available copy off the shelf. The shop assistant seemed puzzled why I needed so many copies but feeling a little embarrassed I quickly paid and rushed out the shop.

Juggling the keys to my car I managed to open the door and get in, and with a sense of nervousness I started to flick the pages to the magazine. There it was in colour – my very first printed article. I was overwhelmed and had to sit for a while taking it all in. I pulled myself together and started the engine. There was only one place I was going, and that was round to see my dad as this obsession was down to him. I made the short journey and pulled up on the drive. It was a nice sunny spring day, and my mum and dad were enjoying the warmth in the back garden. I held up a copy of the magazine and very proudly said, “It’s in, Dad.” My dad shook my hand, took the copy of the magazine, and as he turned the pages I could see him grinning. He looked up and said to me, “Best you get a beer, son. Time to celebrate.”

We sat for a while, and every now and then Dad would pick up the copy of the magazine and start flicking through it, and that’s when he came out with it... “Mark, I want to catch a 30lb’er. What do you think?” I was quite taken back by this, as my Dad hadn’t shown any interest in carp fishing; in fact the last time my dad had cast out a carp rod was more than twenty years ago, so you can understand my shock.

My old man had come away from carp fishing. He was happy catching tench and perch with the odd barbel trip on the Severn, or so I thought anyway. “What’s brought this on, Dad?” I replied. “I don’t know really, Mark. I’ve just got the urge to go again, and it would be a dream come true if I could catch a thirty pounder. And it would be nice to spend time fishing seriously again with you and your brother before I get too old.” I finished my beer and looked over towards my mum. She could see he



was fired up. “Alright then, Dad. Let’s do it.”

I could see how happy he was, and like I said, I haven’t seen him this fired up in ages. Dad didn’t have much left in the way of carp gear; he needed new rods, reels – to be honest a complete new setup. Over the next couple of weeks and numerous visits to Wass’s Fishing Tackle, Dad was finally ready to start his quest. Unfortunately my brother Steven was working down south, so it was down to me to come up with a venue where my dad stood a fair chance of catching his dream.

“What’s the score then, Mark – where are we going to go?” Dad asked.

Lucky for me my best mate Bryan runs a small syndicate in Essex with the biggest being Single at around 39lb. I’d only just pulled off there the season before and knew the lake very well after having an amazing season catching most of the A-Team.

I gave Bryan a quick call to explain my Dad’s situation, and he was more than happy to help. “Mark, tell Jim he can fish it whenever he wants. He doesn’t have to ask. Keep me informed and let me know how you get on.”

Now with the lake sorted, I turned my attention to bait. This was a no-brainer for me, so I got on the phone to Ash at Tails Up and ordered 20kg of the ever-faithful Pro Crab. I’ve spoken about this bait and Tails Up a number of times – confidence is key. The bait turned up in a matter of days. It smelled the nuts like it always does and we were set to start my dad’s quest that Saturday.

Saturday 11th July 2015

I arranged to pick my dad up around 14.30, which meant we would arrive at the lake around 15.00. I could tell the minute I pulled up on the drive he was excited; his fishing gear was leant up against the side of the house all packed and ready to go along with, let’s just say, a couple of beers.

“Alright, Pop? Have you been waiting for me long?” We both had a chuckle, and I put his gear in the car. Dad said bye to my Mum and finally we were lake bound. After a short journey I pulled off the bypass onto a farm track, and we made our way round the outside of the field to the lake. As I drove up the grassy slope to the lake I could see the water was low. We’d had quite a dry spring and early summer that year, so the farmer had obviously pumped out what he needed for his crops.

We both got out of the car. “Where shall we go then, Mark?” “Hold on, Dad,” I replied. “There’s no one else here – let’s have a walk round first and try and find a couple.” We walked anti clockwise around the lake, and to be honest there were fish in front of most swims.

The lake itself is only a couple of acres at best, so it didn’t take long before we were standing in the last swim on the right hand bank. I love this swim, and there is a bar that runs virtually all the way across from the last swim on the right to the first on the left. The water was that low I reckon there could have only been 18 inches of water on top of the bar.



Straight away I could see dark shapes ripping up the top of the bar about two and a half rod lengths out – good ones at that.

“Right, Dad. This is the plan... If you set up in Middle Pipes, which gives you the option to walk along the margin, flick the rod out on the bar and walk the rod back the 30 yards to the swim. What do you think, Pop?” Dad nodded, and before I knew it he was heading to the car for the gear. Well, I say gear – what I meant was his rod bag. Old muggins here ended up being ghillie for the day, but I didn’t mind; the old man was buzzing.

Dad started setting up in Middle Pipes, and out of his net bag came the antique of all rod pods – yep the old K.J.B. I must admit I did have a chuckle, but back in the day believe me these things were the nuts, and my Dad loved it. Once his pod was set up out came the rods already set up. Even after all these years my dad won’t change his style of fishing for anyone. Over the years Steven and I had shown him all kinds of rigs, but none really interested him. He liked to

keep things simple. The end tackle consisted of a 2oz in-line pear finished off with about 15 inches of rig tubing, and the hooklink was a 7-inch piece of his ever-faithful Silkworm with a size 8 Fox Series 2 wide gape – proper old school.

Dad took out a bag of Pro Crab and pierced one of the 14mm baits with his Gardner baiting needle. Trust me you wouldn’t want to sit on one of those needles! Yet again he had kept this item of tackle all these years, a thick black needle and heavily barbed. He held up the baited rig, “Well, Mark. What do you think?” “Looks good, Dad” I replied.

The time had come for Dad to put the bait in position. I picked up the bag of bait and a bucket of pellet, and we slowly walked the 30 yards to the spot. I took a step back at this point, as this was down to him to get things how he wanted them, and with an underarm flick out went the rod. Luckily it was bang-on, and I passed Dad the bucket of bait. At a guess, I suppose he put out about 30 boilies and four handfuls of pellet. He gave me the nod, and we slowly made our

way back up the margin to the swim. Dad set the bobbin to the left hand rod, and on went the alarm. There was silence for a second, and then my old man said, “You going to get the beers out then or what?” and with that the first beers were opened.

Dad baited the second rod. This one was flicked out about 15 yards in front of us with the same amount of freebies offered. With the traps set, Dad sat back and took a mouthful of beer. “Well then, do you think we’re in with a chance son?” “Definitely, Dad,” I replied. I could see he was slightly anxious – well, you know what it’s like when you haven’t been for a while – you just want to get off the mark. So I can’t imagine what it would be like to go twenty years without a carp. At a guess I estimate Dad had been fishing for about forty minutes when out of the blue came a complete one-toner on the rod fished on top of the bar.

Dad was on it straight away – he picked up the rod and turned the handle of the Shimano baitrunner to cancel out the drag system. “What’s it feel like, Pop?” “Feels a bit on the

small side to be honest, son." I got in position with the net, and after a short battle I lifted the mesh around a small mirror. The year before Bryan had put in fifteen stunning little stockies of around 1-2lbs. These mirrors have been doing really well since the stocking, resulting in weight gains around the 3lb mark. The old man's first fish back in the game was a pretty heavily plated mirror of about five pounds.

I shook Dad's hand and didn't waste any time. I put the mirror on the mat and popped the hook out. There's a good chance that this was the first time the stockie had ever seen the bank, so I wanted to get it back asap.

While Dad was putting on a new bait I couldn't resist going to have a look to see if they were still feeding on the bar. As I got closer I couldn't see the bar at all; it was completely clouded over. Happy days, I thought to myself and went back to see if Dad was ready. After a short battle with a boilie stop, Dad quietly made his way back down to the swim and repeated the procedure, again walking the rod back and setting the bobbins. "Bloody hell, that didn't take long, did it?" "No, Pop," I replied. "Let's see if we can

beat your PB now and get one of the better ones." Dad's biggest stood at 22lb – a common from Paxmans, Arlesford, which was a decent fish back then.

Another thirty-five minutes had passed when Dad had a single bleep off the rod on the bar. Then as we both stared at the buzzer, the bobbins very slowly made its way to the top of the rod. In my head every time I get a slow take I automatically think big fish; my thinking behind this is I imagine it's the fish righting itself on the bottom, and the reason it's a slow take is bigger fish take longer to right themselves after picking up a bait.

Yet again Dad picked up the rod and cancelled out the baitrunner system. I looked out towards the bar when all of a sudden a huge bow wave erupted resulting in Dad engaging the backwind on his reel very quickly. Whatever he had just hooked wasn't best pleased about it and proceeded to kite from left to right staying very deep.

"What's it feel like, Pop?" "Quite heavy, son!"

To be honest I didn't need the old man to say anything. I already knew this was a lump. The fight went on for

at least ten minutes with the fish showing no sign of slowing down. It was just staying deep the whole time. As the fight hit the 20-minute stage I thought it would be best if I got in position with the net. Dad wasn't really talking much at this point, which left me wondering what one he was attached to. At that point I didn't think it was Single because I've never known her to scrap like this.

After what seemed like an eternity, the mysterious monster was under the rod tip just making slow ten-yard runs up the margin. Dad applied some pressure, and the fish was yet again in front of us. This time the rig tubing was visible, and I knew any second now I would know which one it was. All of a sudden the fish broke the surface about five yards out, and it was Single, the queen of the lake. I turned to the old man... "Shit's just got real hot – it's her." "You're joking me?" "No Dad, I'm not – bloody concentrate – this is it." I couldn't believe the fight she was giving; I wasn't sure who was tiring first, the fish or my Dad.

Single rolled again, and Dad's rod lunged forward when all of a sudden I heard a snap followed by dad's rod tip



sliding down the main line towards the fish. My heart sank.

"Is she still on, Dad?" "Yes!"

"You're in the hands of the carp gods now, Pop." I was actually praying at this point because I knew what this meant to him, and to be honest what it meant to me. I'm not going to lie; my arse was going 20p, 50p. All I could think about was that bloody rod, and if he lost Single because of it. Let's just say I would have been on the phone to a well-known carp brand first thing Monday morning.

I'm not lying when I say this, but the fight was well into the half hour stage, and I could see Dad starting to struggle with his wrist at this point. "Keep going, Pop – she's nearly done." Dad replied with "So am I – I'm bloody knackered." Just like before, Single was five yards out. I knew she was close to being beaten, and as I got lower with the net, the tip of Dad's rod pierced the surface of the water followed by the rig tubing. The next thing I knew there she was – that buttery belly and the single scale

just lying on the surface. "Keep her coming, Dad."

I lifted the mesh around her stunning frame. I cannot tell you the relief I felt at that point, knowing what my dad had just achieved. "Is she in the net, Mark?" "Yes, Pop," I replied. "Come and have look." Dad held the net, and she rolled onto her side showing off her beautiful colours. "You've done it, Dad – your quest for 30lb'er lasted about two hours in total – not bad."

At this point Dad was overwhelmed. I think because he'd never seen anything this big on the bank before, and I didn't think he thought it would happen this quickly. I left Dad with the net while I went to get the scales and unhooking mat sorted out. Knowing the fish was safe, I took my time. I wanted Dad to cherish this moment – it's not every day you catch your dream, and to be honest I was a bit emotional as well. Deep down I think helping Pop catch his dream is my biggest achievement, which will only be topped by helping my kids

catch their dreams, whether in fishing or whatever they choose to do in life.

After a bit of jumping up and down, I grabbed my scissors and made my way back down to my Dad. "All good, Dad?"

"I can't believe it, Mark – I just can't!" "I know, Pop. It doesn't come much better than that." I cut the line and rolled her up safely in the net. "Do you want to take her up to the mat Dad?" "No, I think it's best you do it, son."

I carried her up the bank and laid her on the mat. As I rolled the mesh back I realised why she fought so hard – there wasn't any belly on her at all, and she was well spawned out. Dad popped the hook out. I don't know why we were so worried – she was well hooked. I laid the wet weigh sling over her and rolled her in it. "Right, Dad – the moment of truth." I popped her up on the scales and they settled on 33lb 4oz. Well down on what she normally is, but it didn't matter – he'd done it – mission complete.

I placed her back down on the mat and got the camera out. Dad only wanted a quick couple of snaps, as he was more interested in getting her back home safely, so I did what was asked before zipping her up inside the mat. "You ready to put her back, Dad?" "Yes, son." And with Dad one side and me the other, we took her back to the water's edge. I laid the mat in the water and left Dad to say his goodbyes while slipping her back and thanking her for the memories.

The only thing that would have made it better was if Steven had been there to share it, but believe me, I was straight on the phone to him, and he was well chuffed. I said to Dad, "We'd better ring Bryan and let him know what's just happened." I guess the phone rang twice when Bryan answered. "Come on then, how big?" "33lb 4oz," I replied. "What, really?" "Yeah, mate."

Bryan was made up for him, and after a quick conversation we agreed that Dad owed him some beers. I shook my Dad's hand and said, "That will take some beating, Pop." Dad replied with, "I don't want to beat it, son." After that let's just say we had a few beers to celebrate. I will never forget that day for as long as I live. Cheers, Pop. ■



The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

Carp fishing has a very rich history. In the early days of it becoming popular, Kent and the Colne Valley were the hot beds of our fledgling pastime and of course there was the legendary Redmire Pool.

Into the new Millennium and one area above all others exploded onto the scene, this was of course Oxfordshire. The quality of the stock of carp in this county was incredible but where did these beautiful scaly beasts come from? When did the Leney's get stocked? What were the origins of the famous Linch Hill fish and what of the history of the now infamous Linear Fisheries? Over the course of the pages of this book all will be revealed as Paul and Geoff have put together the facts of how these lakes were stocked and also banded together many successful local anglers, some of which have never published any of their catches, who tell their fishing tales on these stunning lakes.

With more than 300 pictures of some of this country's finest ever carp and several full page maps, this huge volume tells the story of Oxfordshire's carp fishing history whilst still leaving a little bit of mystery for your imagination!

Included within the pages of this book is the foreword written by local legendary angler and former tackle dealer Joe Taylor. We have chapters from Paul Kitchin on the legendary Vauxhall Lake. David Brian Williams tells us the story of the lakes in the City of Oxford itself! Chris Robinson has written an incredible chapter on two of Dorchester's lakes. Orchid and The Lagoon. The history told in Chris' chapter on these lakes is just incredible and wait until you see the pictures!

Next door to The Lagoon is Dorchester's Alliance Club Lake and Joe Forrester tells his story of the incredible scaly carp that inhabited this lake and how he outwitted them.

We have a real coup in the fact that brilliant all-round Oxford angler John Everard agreed to be interviewed and he has an incredible amount of historical information to share, as has Gerald Stratford who is also included in this informative chapter.

No book about Oxfordshire's carp fishing history would be complete without the story of Oxford's first forty and what a story it is. Richard 'Paddy' Paradine has never written or published any of his catches before and we have his interview here for you of his historic catch which was kept under the radar for so long.

Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing on The Leisure Park was back in the day when the Leney's were still about and culminates with his capture of The Big Leney at its biggest ever weight, the iconic 'Paddy's Fish'.

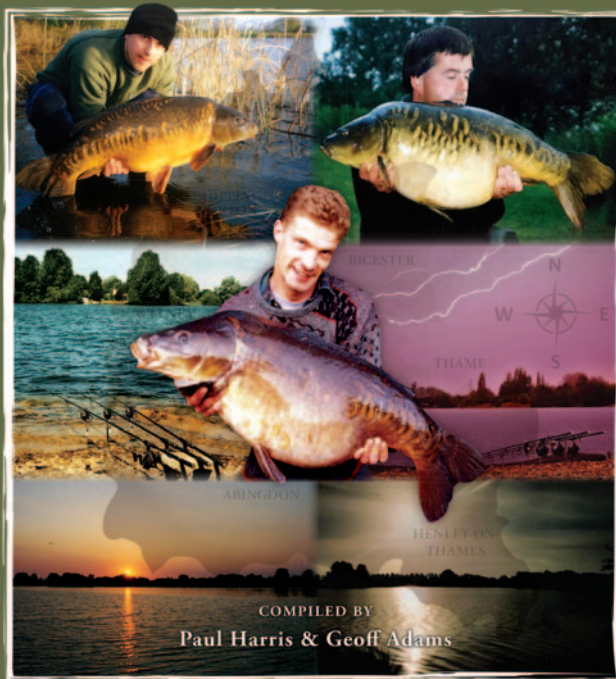
We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson and Milton Pools from Stuart Rothwell. Danny Aplin has written about his time on Linch Hill which will just blow you away! His pictures alone are worth purchasing this book.

Nick Franklin has written a lovely chapter on one of Oxfordshire's little known lakes and his account really hits home that carp fishing isn't always about the numbers game. Sometimes it's just you fishing for the unknown! There are superb chapters on Manor Farm from Paul Hathaway and St Johns from Stewart Roper.

If that wasn't enough Paul and Geoff have wrote chapters themselves which cover the stocking history of lakes, how the gravel company ARC played such a big part in the early stockings of Oxford's lakes, the early days of Linch Hill and Linear Fisheries and facts and stories regarding Oxford's other lakes, some very off the radar!

If you like your history, you like carp fishing and love stories of beautiful scaly carp, there is only one book to purchase this year. Here it is...

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire



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AVAILABLE THIS AUTUMN

Prepare For Success

By John Flewin



When fishing busy day tickets, it can be hard enough to locate the fish and fish for them on your terms. Now imagine that conundrum, then add limited time, usually 12 hours, to the mix. Not only that but a venue that you have to pre-book swims, so your knowledge of the fish and their movement needs to be considered perhaps weeks before. My personal fishing over the last 18 months has been focused on these tight parameters on my local day ticket, White Springs in South Wales.

Now when trying to ensure fish on the bank on these short sessions it's all about preparation. Swim choice is always tough, but when you have to think of what's due to happen in a week or so, it can always be hit and miss. Wind, previous captures and even who's next to you come into play.

Preparation is key

Once your peg is picked you can guarantee that moving is not really an option. White Springs has over 25 30lb-plus carp, so it's a hugely popu-



Watching.

lar venue and you're never normally alone. When it comes to being prepared, this starts at home. Without time to waste on the bank that longer sessions afford you, it's about rig prep and making your bait active and ready to go.

Over the last few months the ever-popular fluorocarbon D-rig has been the killer rig, using Hybrid Tackle's

Armohawk Curves. With many anglers choosing pop-ups on the venue to ensure confident presentation, I believe the edge of boosted matching wafted hookbaits really encourages a quick bite. I have been using the CR Baits' CR1 bottom baits fished spread around the whole swim with the matching wafers to score the bites. With regards gear prep, I opt



Short session common.



for an approach that I know has worked. Baits are defrosted 12 hours before but also boosted with an oily base liquid, allowing them to instantly give off attraction but also break down faster, creating an instant attract bait. Rigs are pre-tied with bait screws, allowing for every conserved second. When you need to be fast, every second counts, and simplifying everything and being confident

means you are on top form every second.

Measuring success

Now all the prep is done, and it's game day. Rock up and make the call. With all best laid plans they can change fast. Even with everything laid out in my head, I can change within seconds of hitting the swim. A recent pair of overnighter session

really were a testament to that. Now I've always done well on the venue, but a recent purple patch really has been testament to preparation and learning a venue can pay off BIG.

Session one was a warm summer day, and after getting to the lake I could see a few spare pegs beyond my chosen peg. Now, not to look a gift horse in the mouth, the hot peg (directly opposite my previously chosen peg) was free. Jumping into the swim, I knew the fish would be held on the two gravel bar features to the left of the swim. With bait confidently deployed and rigs on the spot, it wasn't long before the alarms signalled a savage take. I was onto the rod fast, and as the fish tore off to the left. It was clear it was a fish that knew the pads would be safe. After steering it clear of the pads, the fish rolled over, and it was clear from here on in it was a chunk. As the knees went, I kept saying to myself, "It's a big common, get it in the net." After a spirited brawl, the fish dropped into the net. Boooooom! It was a known A-team member, Hobnob at 37lb 2oz. After pics and high fives, off she went. A quick change of rigs and more bait on the spot, and it was a morning double



Bruno at 38lb 2oz.

take before heading home.

A quick night the week after resulted in three fish from No Carp Corner. These were all fast fish with rods going off as fish were on the mat. The fact I was back out within minutes of the fish going in the net meant I was always active.

After a few days of intense work with my media company, it was back to the lake. This time the lake was pretty full, so I opted to stick to my chosen swim. With lots of features

and being a middle-of-the-lake swim, I was sure fish would be passing through. The weather was, well, appalling. My defrosted and fish oil soaked CR1 baits were hammered out, this time with 150-200 baits over my chosen spots, and then I got into one of the lakeside cabins to try and dry off. The fish clearly had other ideas, with two quick takes on both my right and middle rods resulting in two stunning scaly mirrors. Now being the good boy scout I am, all was prepared, and I was back on the spots within minutes. Now I was soaked to the skin, I stood happy, but oh so wet.

Just as I was browsing through the catch pics, the left-hander slowly started to pick up as the tip wrapped around. I was on the rod at warp speed, but the fish was already kiting behind an island. I locked down, buried my tip and cranked the fish. Luckily she turned. Once clear and in open water, the fight was heavy and deep. As the fish rolled, my bestie, Ethan, and I both looked at each other and gave each other "that look". The fish hit the cord, and the whoops and



high fives started early, as it was evident it was a lump. The scales spun around to 38lb 2oz, and a quick ID showed it was Bruno at her new top weight.

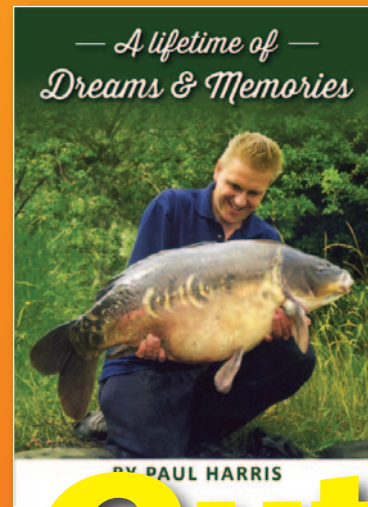
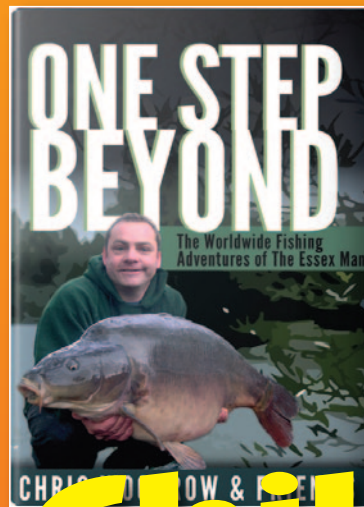
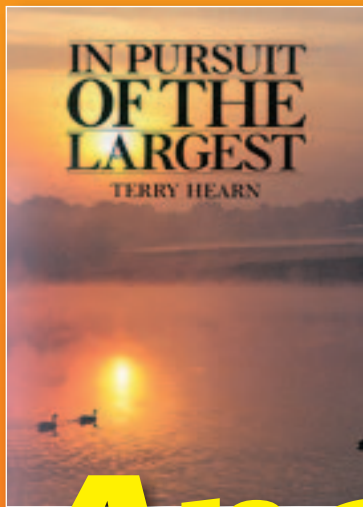
Now we will never say preparation lands bigger fish, but certainly I have found that when time is against you and lifestyle doesn't allow long sessions, being prepared maximises "wet hook" time, and if a bait is in the water, it's game on. ■



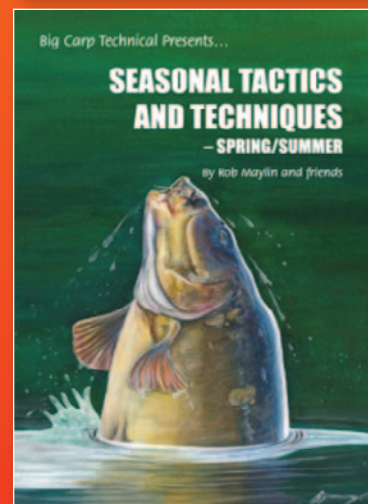
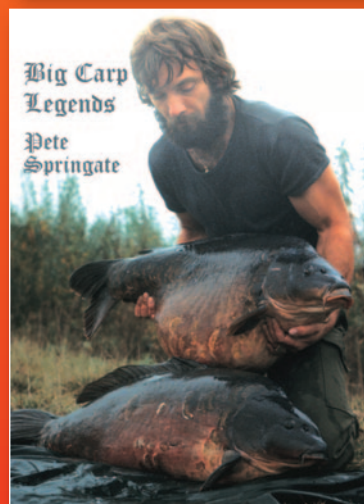
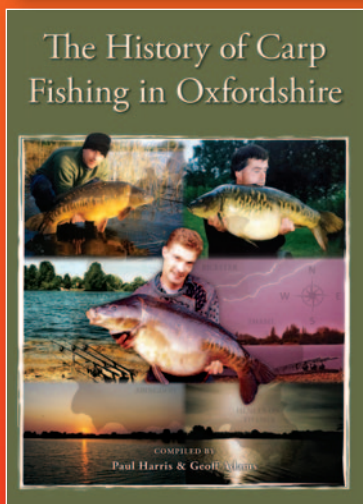
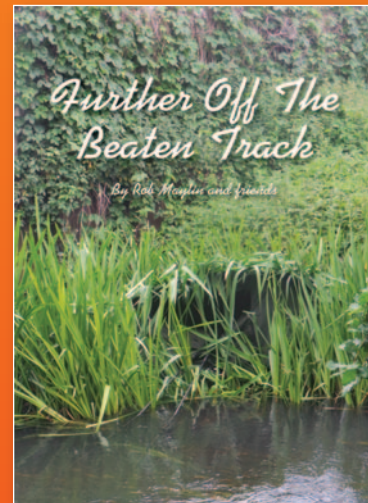
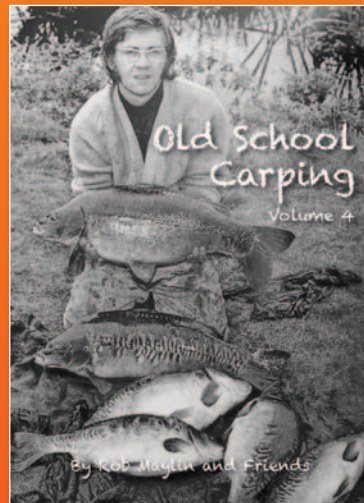
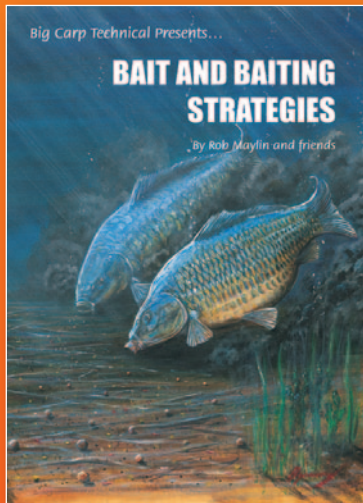
Carpy Humour



Bag Yourself a Score

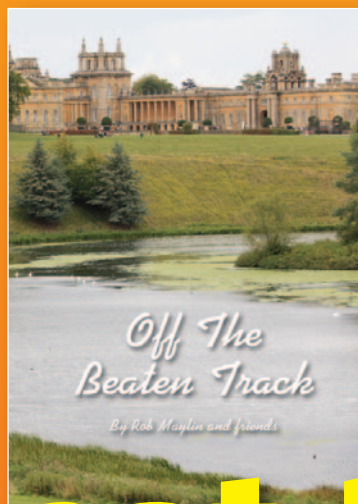


And Chill Out with

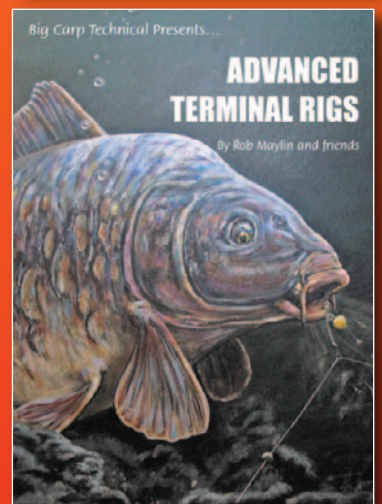
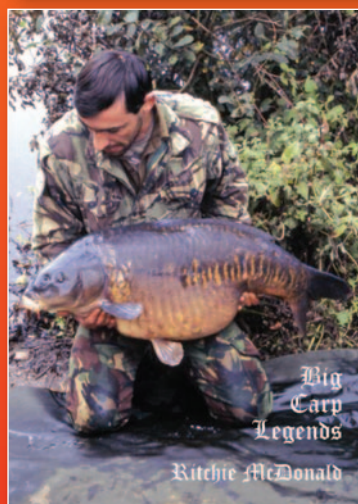
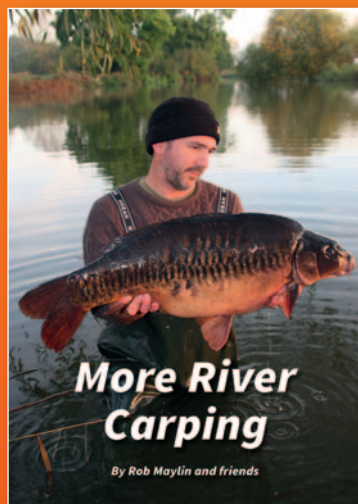
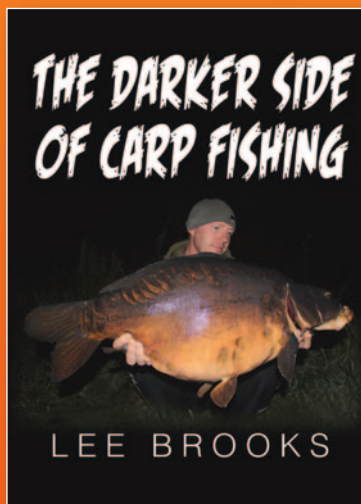


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Horseshoe Dream Session

By Justin Phillips

After searching for two hours around the lake I located the carp all showing in the middle of Summer Bay. The problem was that six of the eight swims were taken, so I set up in the corner swim where I know the carp like to hold up at night, and there is a regular route the carp like to patrol.

I spodded out over my two rods, one against the snags and the other to open water. I was ready for anything that would stray into my path,

and my luck paid off when through the night I managed a 15lb 6oz mirror and a 20lb 1oz mirror alternating between swims each take!

Through the day I didn't have a touch, but I kept the bait going in and prepared for another night of action, and as per the night before at midnight the snag rod was away again. This time I was into an old resident, the Smudge Common, at 33lb 10oz and a new PB! I kept this in the retainer for better pictures. The rods went back out with fresh hookbaits and more spodding, and then I had a

slow take the open water rod, and it was the stunning One Eye Linear at 30lb 11oz! I was absolutely made up, and while having the pictures done my snag rod was away again this time with a 22lb 11oz mirror.

Again I had nothing through the day, but I kept the spod mix going in and the chopped boilies. But like clockwork at 11pm I was into a 25lb 4oz mirror, and come 3am I was into another stunning 21lb 2oz linear followed an even better 11lb 2oz double linear!

I think what give me the edge over



Double linear 11lb 2oz



15lb 6oz mirror.



20lb 1oz mirror.



21lb 2oz linear.

others was that I was spodding sloppy spod mix with Essential IB Particle Syrup every few hours with crushed Essential Cell boilies, and after every time I had a fish and I made sure to put a new glugged in Almond Goo Essential Cell balanced wafter on every cast to boost the smell!

I used a Combi rig using the Korda 15lb IQ because of the slight stiffness to a stripped 15lb N-trap section pinned down with Dark Matter, but I was using a Gardner size 6 Mugga hook, as I have always used them and never needed to change! I used a 3oz flat pear swivel, as I needed to drop the lead every take. ■



One Eye Linear, 30lb 11oz.



22lb 11oz mirror.



25lb 4oz mirror.



33lb 10oz Smudge Common.

Urban Carp fishing on Salford Quays

By Daniel Scranage

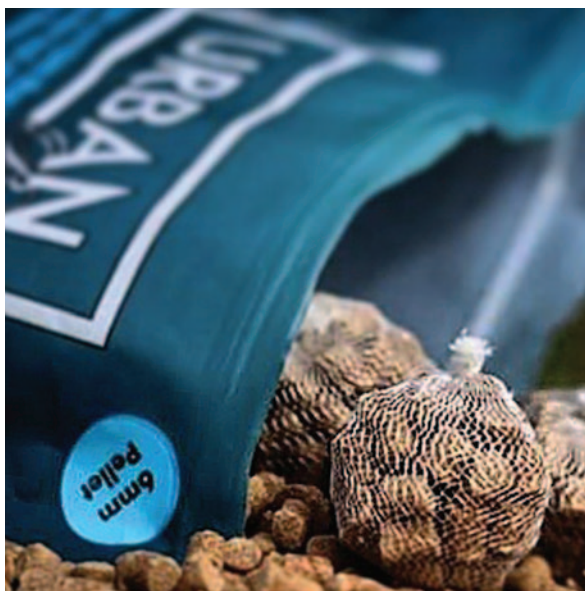
The best way I felt to fish Salford Quays was at first light. The fish were already active on there at first light so I could spot them, which was useful as there were only a few fish and it would be too much of

a hard task to play the waiting game. I had to stay mobile, so my plan was to fish next to structures such as bridges, as a lot of the fish kept showing around the bridges.

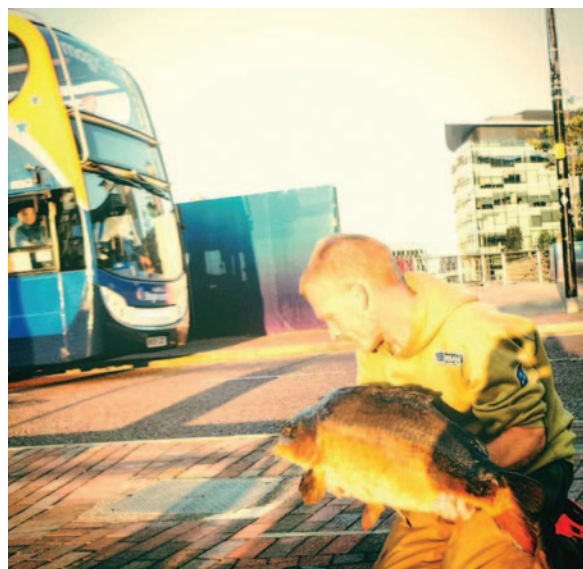
I planned to put a large amount of bait around the structures and then fish them at first light, as I knew it's

where the fish would be.

The Nutcracker was an instant bait on there, and I used Nutcracker washed-out pink pop-ups. I only have one more fish to go out of there and then I've caught all the biggest of the stock. ■



My chosen bait.



One of the characters out this Salford Quays, a very, very old fish they call the Friendly Mirror.



A productive swim with a great skyline.



Half a dozen freebies of the Nutcracker and 2mm Nutcracker pellets is all it took to land this pristine common.



It's fair to say the Nutcracker is tearing a place apart – get on the washed-out pink pop-ups.



Nice scaly one.



Another one falls to the awesome Nutcracker and a washed-out pink pop-up with half a dozen baits scattered around. There is nothing better than catching a really old fish so close to home. Salford Quays is caked in history, and a lot has changed, but this old warrior has remained.



Little old scrapper.



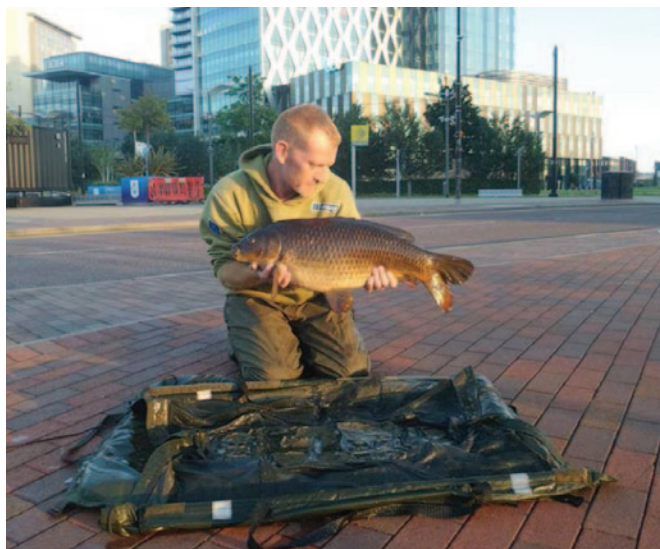
Skyscraper shot.



Tickets please!



A Quays classic.



A cracking Quays common.



A distinctive Quays mirror.



The Old Ghostie.



Skyscraper common.



Washed-out pinks.



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Golf Course Carping

By John Chadwick

My boss at work is a keen golfer, and knowing that I was as just a keen fisherman, every Monday he would tell me how he seen the “big purple fish” swimming about on Saturday morning In the small lily pond right by the ninth hole as he made his way round the fairways. He always followed this up with a warning of how absolutely no fishing is allowed, and the club are very strict on this because there are also prize koi carp in there as well and to basically stay well away. This had me thinking to myself, why bloody tell me then? Listening to this for weeks on end, every Monday, I decided that one Sunday evening I would make the half-mile walk across the fairways to said pond and take a look for myself, with a rod, obviously.

The day came when I was able to get out on a Sunday evening. Once my baby girl was bathed and in bed, I gathered a minimal amount of gear, stopped at the corner shop for a loaf of the good stuff and headed down there. Leaving it as late as possible, about an hour before dusk, would hopefully leave the fairways free of any Tiger Woods wannabes. I unloaded the car outside a house on a residential street just around the corner and quickly scurried across to the pond. Losing all sense of direction, I



had to navigate my way by use of Google Earth on my phone. Everything looks the same on golf courses, and there is absolutely nowhere to hide.

It looked as though I had timed it just right. The sun was setting, and there wasn't a golfer in sight. After walking for a couple of minutes, which was now turning into a jog, head swivelling every ten seconds, I

**(Top) First blood (white tips).
(Bottom) Second fish (distinctive shape).**

could just make out a slice of water in a ditch from about 150 yards away. I was taken back when I reached the water's edge and saw a lovely little pool stuffed with lilies and Canadian pondweed. Shoals of rudd were clearly visible, their vivid blood red fins standing out a mile, untouched and happy without a predator in sight. Almost mesmerised by them I had to snap out of it as I wasn't here to catch them.

Looking around, I instantly spotted an all-white koi from about 20 yards away. It was very small, probably around 5lb. It looked easily catchable, but not wanting to spook off any other carp that might be knocking about, I continued to look, hoping to find something a bit bigger. I ripped up a few pieces of bread as I walked round, crouched down the whole time, throwing bits here and there into the edge of some reeds. As I got to the other end, I saw another small koi that looked awesome, and I thought, sod it; I'm going to see if he likes the Warbies.

Quickly attaching a piece of crust to the freelined size 6, I lowered it in his path, and he slurped it without





hesitation. A quick thrashing fight followed, and a beautiful but small black and orange common koi was soon having both flanks photographed. The whole thing from hooking to releasing the fish lasted about two minutes. Paranoid I may have either been seen or spooked the whole pond, I collapsed the rod and went and sat by a tree for a moment's rest and rolled a smoke.

Whilst sitting there quietly, a few dog walkers went by without noticing me, and I began to feel at ease again. Looking down to the opposite end where I threw in some bread when I arrived, I saw rings spreading from the area and a slight bit of movement.

Thinking it was probably the rudd attacking the bread, I gave it a moment, then SLURP – the unmistakable sound of a carp scoffing on the surface. Within 20 seconds I had a piece of bread in the area. I couldn't see any carp, but I knew there were one or two under the lilies.

Just out the corner of my eye I saw a dark shape near some reeds, and they moved and parted as something bulky adjusted itself. I pulled the bait out slowly so the soggy bread wouldn't come off the hook and lowered it in closer to the reeds without even making a ripple. No sooner had I laid it down on the surface than a pair of black lips wolfed it down. I connected

with a solid weight as it dived into the lily pads. A quick change of direction, and it was free, charging around and putting a nice bend in the six-footer. I knew I had a better fish on this time. A dogged fight lasted about two or three minutes, and it went in the net first time of asking. I stripped some Canadian and lily stems from out the net and peered in. It was a lovely, dumpy shaped, dark common with a fat, kinked tail wrist. I didn't have scales, and it was only an upper double, but it had almost certainly never seen the bank... and from a pond five minutes down the road from my house that I never knew existed. Once I'd slipped it back the light was going fast, and I didn't see anything else. To be honest, I really can't see there being anything bigger in there, so I haven't been back – true hit 'n' run fishing. My boss's face was certainly a picture when I showed him my photos the next day!

That night and the following days, all I could think about was how many other golf courses held carp in their ponds and lakes? Nearly every golf course has water on it of some form, and most if not all of them never get fished. Yes, they are no fishing or poaching, but it is different to a nature reserve or SSSI etc, as you are likely to receive a fine or other punishment if you are caught fishing these sort of lakes, whereas if you are caught on a golf course the likelihood is that you will just be asked to leave, therefore the risk and paranoia is reduced. Using the trusty old Google Earth, I started looking for fairways from above, near to where I live.

I came across one not too far away that looked like it had it all: the clubhouse, luscious green fairways, sand bunkers and most importantly what looked to be a fairly sizeable lake! Bingo! It was also right in the shared grounds of a big posh hotel, quite literally under the nose of it. This was going to be a different kettle of fish, and that's if there were even fish in there! I rang a friend of mine, Carl, who I knew lived near this lake, just to see if he knew anything. To my surprise he told me he's been going on there himself on and off for a while, having a few carp to nearly 20lbs! I shouldn't have been surprised really,



(Top) 16lbs.
(Left) 19lb 15oz.

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Legendary Carp Paintings



- Basil
- Heather
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- Mary and Mary's Mate



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a good angler is Carl, and with it being round the corner from his house I should've known. He has since moved down south, so I told him I would continue his work, so to speak.

I met up with Carl the next evening after work and we had a sneak about on dusk. The lake is just under three acres, so still relatively small, but deepish with depths to 10ft. It really is a thing of beauty – reed lined and with snag trees, an ancient eerie statue overlooks the lake as does the golf club balcony and the hotel. Well, the fish activity was impressive on first sight, fizzing like lemonade in the deeper part of the lake. A quick sprint back up to the car in the half-light for a couple of rods, and within ten minutes I had two single Signatures in the middle of it. An hour passed, and then two. The fizzing slowed down, and it dawned on me that it wasn't going to happen that night, although I don't know how! They must've been preoccupied on naturals. Before I left I handballed 2kg of Krill in a couple of lovely looking spots and vowed to return at the next opportunity, and return I did...

The first real session was a few days later, an evening session on a weeknight after work. I arrived about 9pm to a flat calm lake with not a golfer in sight – winner. Quickly dropping down into the area I had pre-baited, I cast out two simple KD rigs



(Above) Mid double
(Below right) In the ditch.

with Krill wafers on and a solid bag threaded on each rig with a few whole baits, chops and Krill powder inside. A dozen or so baits were thrown at the spots and I sat back and got a brew and a smoke on. About an hour later, right on dusk, the left rod was away, clutch going into meltdown as the rods were on the deck with no alarms. This fish fought like a tuna, flat-rodding me a good few times and taking a good five or six minutes to come in. If I'd lost it, I would have said it was a big one, but it turned out to be a small mid double common, perfect condition with white tips on its tail. Great start!

I recast the rod and put it back down on the floor. By now it was about 10.30pm, and I was planning to stay til midnight at the latest. Whilst I was looking at the pictures of the fish I had just caught, the other rod was away! A much slower take this one, and as soon as I lifted the rod, I felt a grating sensation, shuddering and then solid.

I kept tension on for a while until it came loose. I reeled in the slack frantically, but it was gone, and I was left with half a hooklink. At least I didn't leave anything trailing, I thought. Whilst I was breaking that rod down to put it in my quiver, the remaining rod that did the first bite had a major drop back. It was a bream. Yuck. I'd had enough; it was a hectic couple of hours. Upon leaving I gave 'em all that I had left on me, about 1kg of the

Krill, hand balled in around 15 to 20 yards out.

I was back the next night, and it was pretty much exactly the same as the night before, except I didn't lose any. I arrived at a similar time and caught a lovely 17lb common with a really distinct shape to it. I had a bream as well and was gone for around midnight. Things were going great: two fish and one lost in just two short evening trips. I didn't manage to get down again for a couple of weeks after that due to family commitments and fishing elsewhere at the weekends. When I next got the chance to get down there it was a weekend...

I planned to do my first overnighter on a Friday and would be gone for



6am latest, before the groundsmen were out raking the sandpits, mowing the grass, collecting balls from the lake etc. I arrived around 9pm again and got the rods out. No sooner had I set my bed up in my ditch than one of the rods was away! It's like they were waiting for me to give them their fix of the Krill. It was another scrappy common around 16lb, yet again pristine. The rod got leant against a bush for a while whilst I put my sleeping bag on my bed and set up my stove, etc. About half an hour had passed after that carp, and just as I was about to get a new lead on and have a look to see if the rig was still okay, the other remaining rod went, and I mean went! It was like I'd hooked a marlin. I've never known carp to be as full of beans as they were in this place, each one pulling my arm off... possibly because they aren't fished for regularly. This one did feel slightly better as well, and when it went in the net I could see it was. I weighed it at 19lb 15oz.

Chuffed with my night's work by 10.30pm, I decided to leave and not do the night as intended. I'm not greedy, and there was also a wedding reception in the hotel. Loud music would have kept me awake until god knows what time, and every now and then boozed-up guests were coming out onto the balcony and wandering

(Top) On the fairway, next to the statue.
(Below) Black and orange koi.



down towards the lake, making me uneasy. So I left happy, but not before giving them a good helping of the Krill. Hearing all those baits plopping into the water under a bright moon, I just knew they would be scoffing all night. I wasn't too bothered though because as I said, I'm not greedy, and it keeps them confident.

Again a few weeks passed, and I couldn't get chance to get there. Fishing socials at the weekends and work and family commitments kept me busy. I had a walk down in the middle of the day on a Sunday, dressed in normal clothes so as not to draw attention, and it was heaving, golf buggies flying around everywhere! I

looked down at my ditch and laughed to myself, thinking what I must look like sitting there until midnight. I did a full lap acting as "golfer" as I could.

As I walked down along the edge of the fairway, I approached the statue that was opposite my ditch, and I spotted half a dozen carp really close in next to the reeds. There were four typical mid to upper double commons, a mega looking linear mirror of a similar size and one fish that was totally different to the rest. It was a pale chunky mirror around the mid 20 mark, almost Simmo like. I crept forward, but they saw me and bolted. Plans were made to do a night the next weekend. It was now the start of August, and the nights were getting longer.

I arrived for an overnight session the next Saturday, slightly earlier due to the drawing-in nights, probably around 8.30pm, and I planned to leave at first light. My mate Mark came with me and stuck a couple of rods out as well. We opted to go opposite where I usually fished, as there wasn't much room for two people over there, plus I wanted to drop a bait in the edge where I had seen the chunky mirror. So we set up either side of the statue, which was a bit spooky to look at in the dark, on the lovely well-kept grass on the edge of the fairway. We both dropped rods in the edge and slept under the stars. A few smokes later and I was giving it zeds. Going off the previous evening sessions, I expected to have one before midnight, but for the first time it wasn't to



be. The rods remained motionless until about 3.30am when I had a blistering take from right under my feet where I'd seen the group of fish the weekend before. After a typical scrappy fight, yet another perfect mid double common was in the net. Not what I'd hoped it would have been, but I will never tire of catching unmolested carp – big or small, I love them all. I dropped the rod back in and stayed awake until we had to go at about 6am, but nothing else happened.

I have fished there only once since then, and that was a short evening session just the other day that produced my first blank! However, it was not time wasted, as I saw the chunky mirror again, flanking against a sunken log in the shallows. I'll catch it, or maybe another surprise might pop up – who knows?

It seems like I've spent all year on there, but in reality I've only had the rods out half a dozen times. It's been really short and sharp fishing without having to pay or compete with any noddies, which is a rarity these days!



Dumpy common.

I've been scoping out a couple of other lakes that are of a similar setup in the grounds of golf and country

halls etc. Who knows what secrets they hold? I'm here to find out. It's what it's all about – having fun. ■

Carpy Humour



BIG CARP TOP TEN

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The Trent

Part 2 By Mitch Godfrey

After my amazing opening day on the River Trent with two upper 20s in an afternoon, and one being so close to the magical 30 at 29lb15oz, I decided to go back to the spot and give it a really good go to see if I could get that elusive river 30.

I decided on a four-day prebaiting campaign using 2kg of Poloni boilies every day. Also in the mix was hemp and tiger nuts, this mainly for clearing the area as there was a lot of weed present. I've found that particle really gets the fish rooting around, and in some cases can completely clear an area, as I much prefer to fish hard on the bottom than a chod in most cases.

So it was with a degree of optimism that I arrived on the fifth day. After a short lead around, I did indeed find a clearer spot. Although not completely





clear, it was good enough for me to feel confident in my presentation. But the area was small, so I decided on one rod rather than my usual two-rod approach.

I will often fish with one rod, and in most cases feel just as confident as over the years. I've learnt that one rod in the right place is better than putting in another just for the sake of it.

I started by putting in 2kg of Bait-Tech's super hemp seed. I love this stuff; the oils that it gives off are second to none. This was followed by about 30 freebies with 14mm Poloni being the obvious choice, having prebaited with them. A Poloni Waffer went on the hair for a nice balanced rig. The rig is my own; it's very simple, but like nothing else out there. I'm thinking about making it available, but for now it's staying under my hat! The spot is only a rod length out, so the baiting and casting can be very precise, just how I like it – a small bag of crushed boilies on the hook and out it goes.

So the rods were in and the traps were set for 8pm.

I'd got two nights in this peg, and I was feeling pretty confident. Just into dark and I was off; the Delks screamed into life with the fastest run ever, and after a doggy battle the net was slipped under a lovely fat tench, about 7lb – not really what I was after, but a lovely rare fish for the Trent. It was slipped straight back in, as it

wasn't my intended quarry. I added a little more bait and off we went again.

My first carp arrived at midnight, a bit of a scrappy lean mirror, a typical river fish.

I went on to catch seven more carp, and a few bream to boot, not the magical 30 that I was hoping for, but some of the larger residents did make an





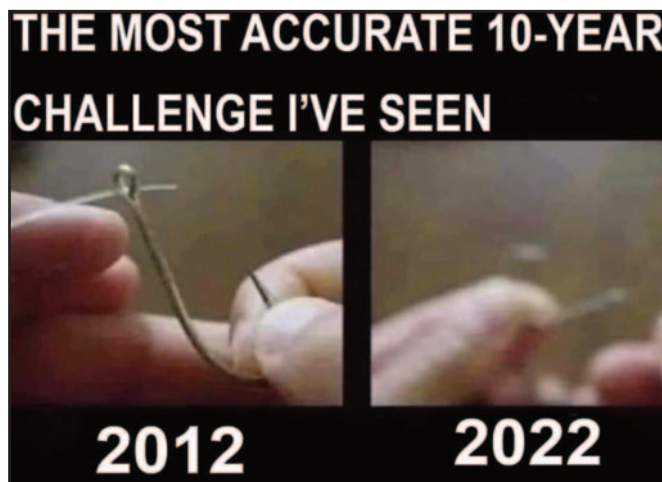
appearance, and when I say larger, I mean for the Trent. In my opinion a twenty is a great fish for this river, and a mid twenty excellent. It just goes to show what a red-letter day that opening day was for me, a day that will be stored forever in the memory banks!

The rivers now are just about the only place an angler can go to find peace and tranquility, with wild fish that in a lot of cases have never been caught, and they fight twice as hard than their still water cousins.

It beats me why people pay through the nose to fish a lake that's hammered with anglers to catch a fish that's been caught many times before when there are miles of river out there with the unknown just waiting to surprise.

Anyone who fancies a change of venue and to have a go at river carp fishing can find me on Facebook. ■

Carpy Humour



SECRETS OF THE THAMES

Price
£29.95

Secrets of The Thames

By Rob Maylin and friends

The River Thames flows through southern England. It is the longest river entirely in England, with a total length of 215 miles (346km) and the second longest in the United Kingdom, after the River Severn. While it is best known for flowing through London, the river also flows alongside other towns and cities, including Oxford, Reading, Henley-on-Thames, and Windsor.

The river gives its name to three informal areas: the Thames Valley, a region of England around the river between Oxford and west London; the Thames Gateway; and the greatly overlapping Thames Estuary around the tidal Thames to the east of London and including the waterway itself. Thames Valley Police is a formal body that takes its name from the river, covering three counties.

In an alternative name, derived from its long tidal reach up to Teddington Lock in south west London, the lower reaches of the river are called the Tideway.

It rises at Thames Head in Gloucestershire, and flows into the North Sea

via the Thames Estuary. On its way, it passes through London, the country's capital, where the river is deep and navigable to ships; the Thames drains the whole of Greater London. Its tidal section, reaching up to Teddington Lock, includes most of its London stretch and has a rise and fall of 7 metres (23ft).

Along its course are 45 navigation locks with accompanying weirs. Its catchment area covers a large part of South Eastern and a small part of Western England and the river is fed by 38 named tributaries. The river contains over 80 islands. With its waters varying from freshwater to almost seawater, the Thames supports a variety of wildlife and has a number of adjoining Sites of Special Scientific Interest, with the largest being in the remaining parts of the North Kent Marshes and covering 5,449 hectares (13,460 acres).

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Cash Money

By Ricky Townley



Friday morning en route to work as usual, I stopped at a petrol garage for cup of Rosie Lee and to fill the workhorse up. Just before filling up I realised that I had lost my wallet, and I had no cash on me to get into work. So there was only one option – lake bound. Tunes were pumping on the way, and my head was in the game. With the diesel light flickering, I got to the gate, and with a big smile I'd made it.

After many laps climbing up trees and pushing through brambles, I managed to find a nice group of fish tucked in a swim. That has been a bit of a nightmare for me in the past, having three takes and losing all three – savage! But there was no way I was not going to angle for this group of fish.

What's in the past stays in the past – fresh start and all that. So with the adrenaline and excitement of noticing my target fish in this group, I went about getting the rods out without

foaming the water to bits and spooking 'em. Luckily I already knew the spots from the previous nightmare session. I went with the two-rod approach as the third was not needed in this case. Knowing the bottom was a bit silty, I opted to go for the rig I have 100% faith in – the stiff hinge. I positioned my two rods both with

white pop-ups on the route the fish were taking.

After setting up home for the night, the kettle was almost ready. With that I phoned the bank to cancel my bank cards etc. I was on the phone talking jargon, then in the corner of my eye I noticed a big dirty common bosh over my rods, and I couldn't wait to end



the phone call, one, because of the fish, and two, the lady on the phone was doing my nut in. Two hours had gone past, and I was sat there thinking, this swim does not like me. With that thought in my head my bobbin whacked the alarm and went into meltdown...

It scared me so much that I jumped off the bedchair down to the rod and leant in to a powerful fish that was stripping line. In the back of my head I kept thinking about the three I had lost before – it was tense, but with wobbly legs and heart in my mouth I managed to get the better of this

angry one. I got the net in position, and the fish came up for a gulp of air. Boom, and the net went under it. I noticed as she went into the net that it was an awesome common going by the name of Cash – one that was on my list. Done! Shortly after, Cash was sorted and chilling in the retainer waiting for the weigh-in.

After that I went about making some calls to the boys to get some shots done. Good pal Tristan Peel came down and did his thing – big up, brother and thanks for the shots. Now back to the weighing. I knew before that Cash had done 40 in the past, so fingers and toes were crossed that she would do it again. We hoisted her up on the dial, and this time round she went 38lb 15oz, which I was more than happy with, as it was a PB common for me. Big thanks again to the boys for their help.

So that's my story, which is quite fitting really, considering I lost my wallet that morning but found Cash later in the day. ■

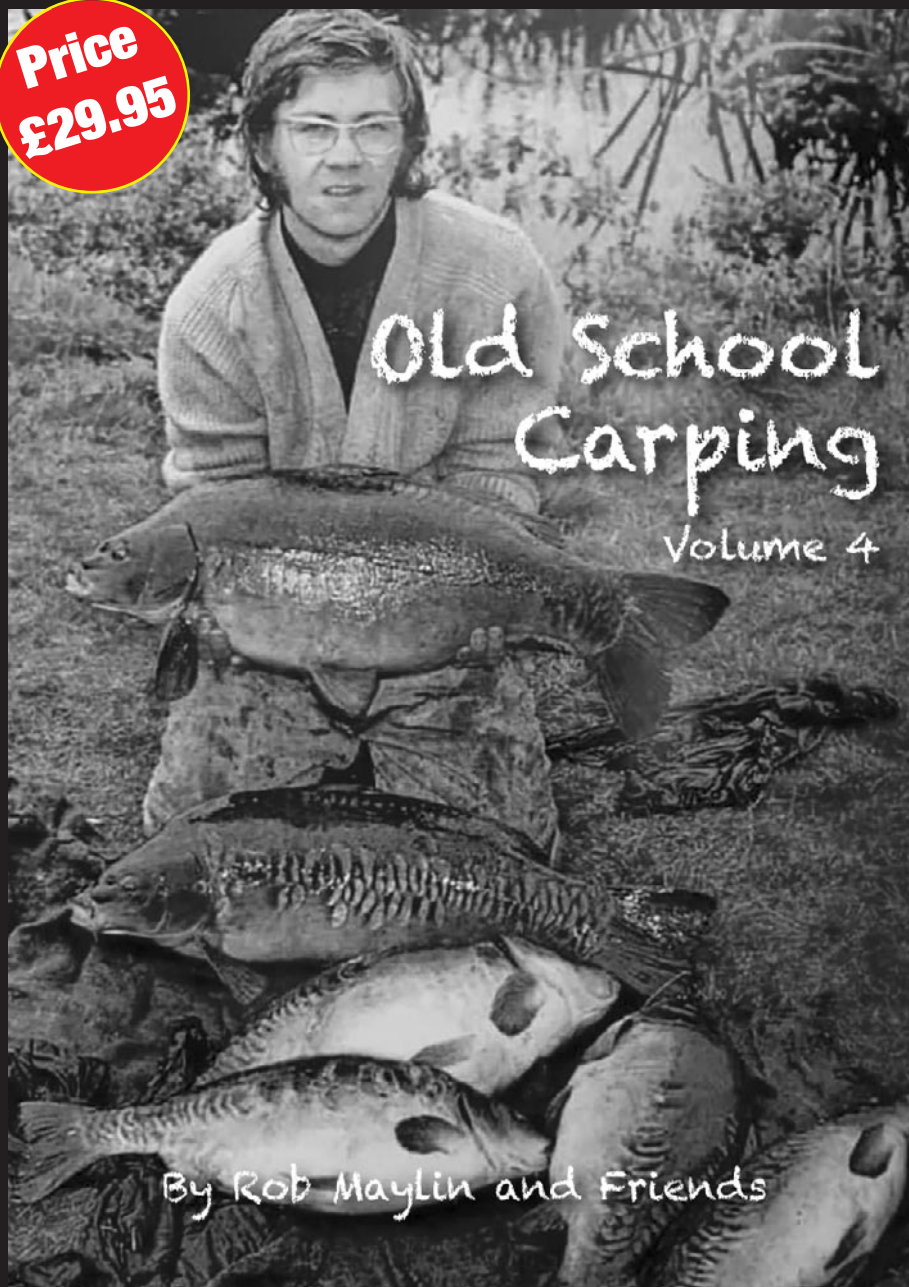


Carpy Humour



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The 'Old School' series has become one of our most popular sets of books we have ever published. It appears that, in this fast-moving society we find ourselves, more and more anglers are keen to look back at how things used to be, where it all started, before the commercialism that now controls our angling, before the 'sponsored angler', before Facebook, the Internet, or even mobile phones! However, did we survive? It certainly was a very different sort of carp angling to today's high pace, remote control, Snapchatting, wannabe blogger's world we find ourselves in.

Our contributors to volume 4 are the unsung heroes of that bygone age who were catching carp years ago before the hair rig when not everyone could catch them quite so easily.

But the big difference between the line-up for this volume is that these anglers' names may not be known to you. Unlike our previous volumes this one is not all about the famous anglers of this time. Volume 4 is about many of the very successful anglers who did not seek fame by publicising their catches at the time.

Anglers who smashed their venues and the record books but kept quiet until

now. So, let's take a look at what Volume 4 has to offer, and why I consider it the best yet. Here is a brief synopsis of volume 4's line up and what their chapters are about. A Brief Moment in Time by Kevin Grozier, My Early Carp Life by Anthony Rogers, A Tale of Two Twenties by Dave Miller, Back to the Old Days by William Lovett, Blackroot Pool by Brian Ingram, The Old School Scrapbook, The Seventies by Christopher Davis, Yateley North Lake June 1985 by Nick Peat, Early Carping Memories of Broadwater by Phil Martyn, The Tale of a Twenty Pounder (My first) by Steven Hall, Looking Back – Old School by Steve Fisher, Early Seventies Carping by Gerry Giles, My Introduction to Carp Fishing by Lee Fisher, Billingsgate in Focus by Kris Ford, Old Skool Carping by Paul Tidiman, 'Billy' the Mirror, Church Pool, Patshull by Tim Thornton and My First Doubles by Stewart Crowther.

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London City Angler

By Matthew Pease and Alex Wright



Fishing has been in my life for as long as I can remember. It's the one thing that would motivate me over anything else. Getting up for school was a chore, but a 5am start for fishing was something I looked forward to. With no transport of our own, my brother and I started exploring spots accessible by the London Transport network, ranging from the Thames in west London to the canals in the east. No specific targets, it was just a case of seeing what happened. The adventure and travelling was a huge part of it, almost as much as the fishing itself. Don't forget, this was before the Internet, so it was very much trial and error, and in hindsight the spots we were fishing were well known. To us though they were new and exciting, and that mentality has always stayed with us.

Over the years the commercial side of fishing has exploded and alongside that the growth of social media, which has made fishing a lot more accessible for so many people. This learning curve provided easy access to large fish in comfortable surroundings, however the mystery was gone. This led us back to our old skool haunts but with more insight and ambition, and really, it's what started off the foundation of London City Angler.

In 2011 Nash released their first Urban Banks video with Alan Blair

LONDON CITY ANGLER



showcasing the alternative side of fishing. One evening in the Lewisham Wetherspools I got talking to my mate Alex who works with cameras and was looking for a new project. We decided to start a YouTube channel,

London City Angler. The original concept was to show what London has to offer as an alternative to commercials within the M25. We started off with a Go Pro Hero 2, editing software and nothing else. The first video we made was a few clips, hacked apart with a 90s hardcore rave soundtrack. After the first few videos I started to get more of a concept, the first being a series called the Docklands Diaries.

I spent the next four months documenting the spot and creating a blog rather than just clips of catching and landing. The fishing was great; I caught loads, I got plenty of footage and compiled seven parts to the series. The results were good, but I soon realised that going out at 5am on my own, filming, fishing and basically being a one-man band had its limitations. After a couple of videos with terrible sound, missed action and a lot of stress I had a rethink.

Fast forward to 2015, and I decided to take a different approach. My brother Danny was doing well pike fishing on the Thames at Richmond most weekends, so I made a video purely behind the camera. Without





having the restrictions of fishing, I was able to relax and be more creative and film the entire session.

One of the things Alex and I discussed at great length when we created the channel was to try and make it interesting for viewers not necessarily into fishing. Instead of dull tutorials and long unexciting bait explanations, we based our concept a bit like skateboarding videos, action,



location, music and having fun. We really enjoy the whole process of putting a video together. More recently Alex has been making the music for the videos so we can keep everything "in house". There are channels releasing content more regularly than us, but for us it's a hobby and each video has a lot of thought behind it. That's the difference between London City Angler and a channel with some matey blanking and drinking tea on every other upload. It's not a commercial venture; it really is intended to show what is out there within the M25, and I think our subscribers appreciate that.

Unfortunately, having achieved what I set out to do by documenting these spots, especially with carp, I do feel it has had a detrimental effect on the venues we have publicised, drawing a massive amount of attention to



them. This weighs on my conscience, especially for small venues with limited space. With this in mind our two most recent videos, Carp Under The Motorway and Search For A London Barbel have been at spots that we purposely chose for their unglamorous locations. These were both the filthiest, most urban spots I have ever fished, one of them right next to a crack den.

Through the course of filming, meeting people and exploring city venues, the sense of community really struck a chord with me, especially as people shared their secrets and knowledge. This is what inter-



ested me, and I soon realised that I didn't want these spots to get too well known. Our Big Fish From London Parks video increased the numbers at that venue dramatically, and for interesting spots this isn't necessarily a positive. The two years of the channel has made me realise what a double edged sword social media can be. It's a great tool, but you need to realise the impact it has on the small fragile community that is inner city London.

Since starting London City Angler the channel has pushed me to constantly search for new and interesting spots, and any blue crack between the grey is always a possibility for a new adventure. London has so much to offer; you never know what you might find. Subscribe, like and share, but most importantly explore it for yourself.

Find LondonCityAngler on YouTube. Listen to our music at soundcloud.com/mr-rinse ■





The Soho Loop Canal Network

By Simon Bates

Being brought up in the suburbs of Birmingham and living next to Hockley Port Marina On the Soho Loop Canal Network was where it all started for me. Most days after school and every weekend you would find me at Hockley Port, watching, chasing and trying to catch these elusive canal carp, and it soon became an obsession for me. It took a while to learn their habits, and I soon discovered that I needed to use stronger gear to catch them.

I've always had a love for canal carp, and most of my childhood mates thought I was crazy at the time! There's just something special about catching canal carp that you can't get from catching them anywhere else. I'm still just as hungry to catch them as I was as teenager, and the bug and passion is still there, as it



always has been. Obviously with family life and work time, my fishing is limited now, but I still find time to get on the towpaths and local park pools

when I can with my mate, Greg Regan, another diehard canal carper. I've caught so many canal carp, I couldn't imagine how many it is, from



as small as a couple of pounds to as big as 30. There have been some truly stunning fish amongst them all, and of course some odd looking ones too. Winter is my preferred time of year for my canal fishing with no boat traffic, and prebaiting works well. Finding lived-on boats is good as they are a canal carp's paradise, especially in winter with free food and warmth.

Some questions I regularly get asked:

Why do you fish the canals?

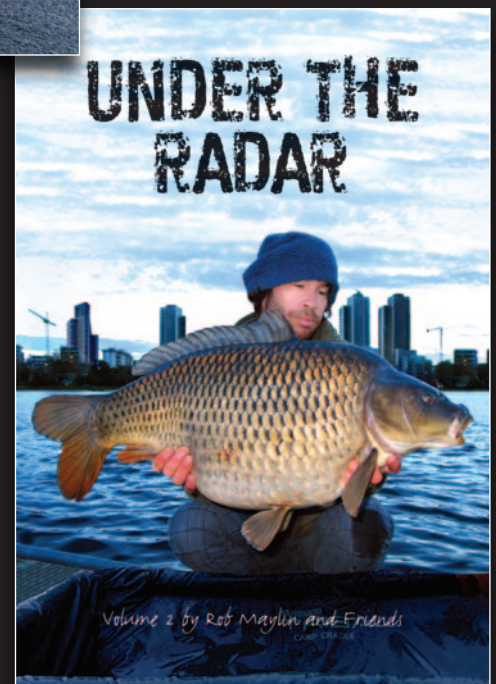
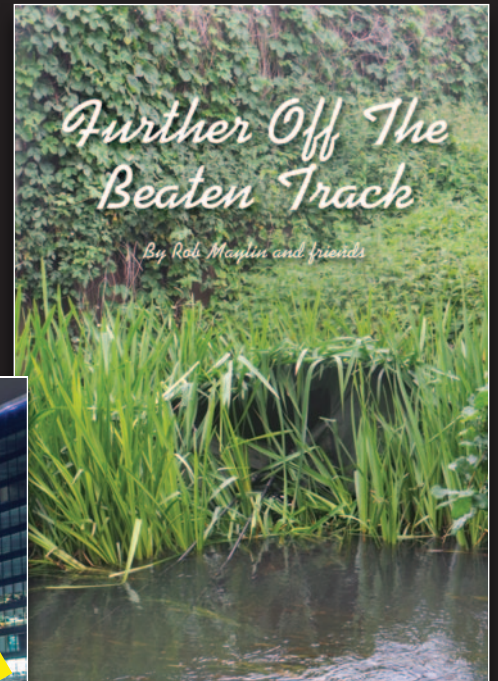
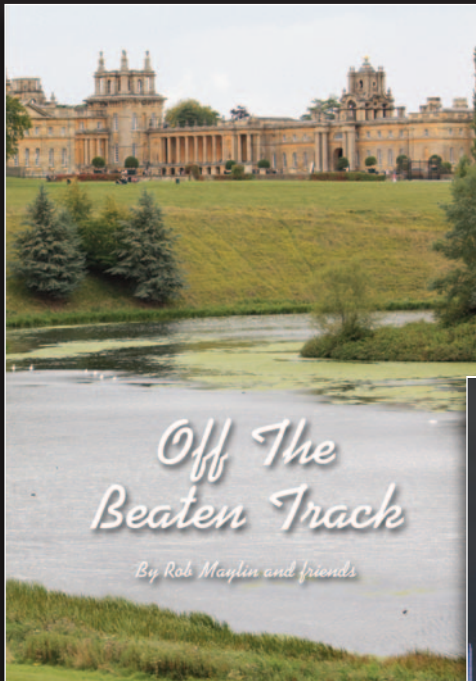
Well, like I said, it's been a passion since I was a teenager. There's nothing quite like carping on the canals, fishing for the unknown, although repeat captures do happen, and you get to know some fish, as they become residents in certain areas.

But some fish do travel miles and are always on the move. The atmosphere and peace and quiet is something that has to be experienced to be understood. The smell of the wood burners on the barges as winter draws in just makes it all the better. Miles and miles of canal stretches everywhere, mostly unfished. I'm always trying to find those old club



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water stretches that were stocked years and years ago and have been neglected.

How do you fish the canals?

Keep it simple! These are not pressured fish, although some spots are now becoming that way, as anglers flood certain spots in search of their first canal carp. As a teenager, it used to be luncheon meat for me all the time until I started using boilies and corn. But to be honest, most baits will work on canal. I roll my own and use those, and just a handful of bait around the area I'm fishing is more than enough. A good friend of mine once took the leftovers of his Sunday dinner with him and caught! Simple braided rigs and small leads has always been my way.

When's the best time of year?

You will catch them all year round if you can find them. In the warmer months most carp will go on their travels and can be caught miles away from their last capture, unless they're resident marina fish. I will fish the canals in the summer but not as much as I will do in the winter, as I know where to find them in the colder months. Plus there nothing worse than getting wiped out at first light in the summer by a stealthy barge! So yes, definitely the winter for me.

Memories ?

Every canal session is a good memory

for me, and I've caught some amazing canal carp along the way. I've seen all sorts whilst fishing them and had some great laughs too. From bunking school and going fishing to fishing with some great canal carpers who stay under the radar and can catch a carp from a puddle. I've fished some stretches you wouldn't walk a pit bull on, and some stretches that are like paradise. All memories that make me

love it.

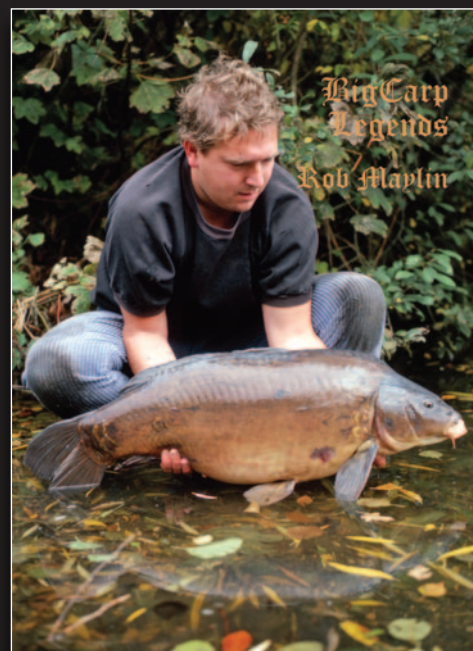
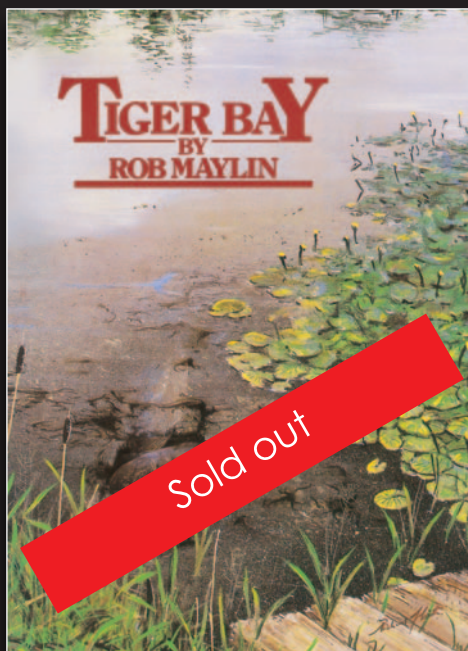
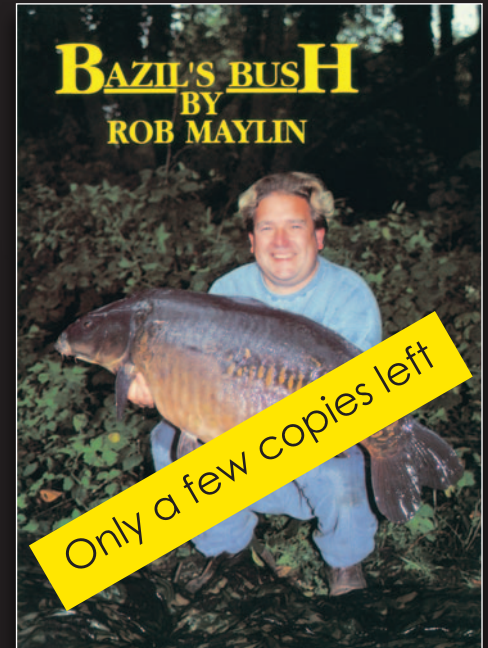
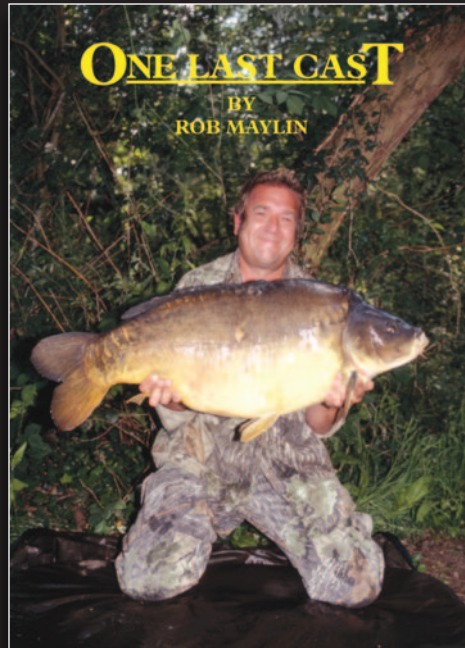
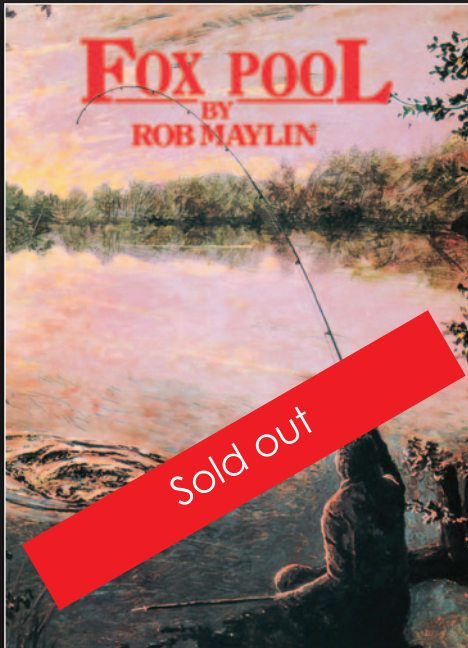
Do I fish anywhere else?

Of course I do. I'm lucky to have some good friends that are passionate anglers too and regularly fish abroad with them. I've had carp up to 70lb abroad, but my passion is on the canals and on local council park waters with a close circle of like-minded friends. That's what I call true carping. ■



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Chasing Dreams – Twynersh Pit 3

Part 1 by Warren Fenn

It was the spring of 2015 when it all started, that buzz developing within, that passion and desire to chase that one unique creature, the one carp that would sit on the throne in any lake, the queen of her quarry. For some time now I've had my eyes firmly fixed on a very special little pit in the Chertsey area, which held some unique characters, a pit that had been maturing nicely over the years, but a pit that held a particular carp, a rather large, old common, which was known as the queen of her lake, Nina.

The old gravel pit is surrounded by six other pits, which are all part of the Twynersh Fishing Complex. The pit that held Nina is Pit 3, a three to four-acre gravel pit, which is full of snaggy tree-lined banks, gravelly plateaus, areas of thick weed, lily pads and two huge tree-lined islands – a carp's paradise if you ask me. The lake holds a stock of around 40 carp, which included a good number of upper 20s,

(Top) Boaty swim snags.
(Below) Common.



around 14 30s and one mid-40, which was Nina of course.

I purchased my season ticket for Pit 3 towards the back end of February, but with work and family commitments I really couldn't manage to get my teeth stuck into the place until April. It was then that I stumbled on what seemed like an edge, and I managed to get my first bite, which allowed me to work out exactly where to start.

After recently joining good friend Terry Dempsey's bait company,

Urban Baits, I was eager to give his baits a try. It was a Wednesday afternoon, and after finishing work early I decided to take a wander around Pit 3. The weather was great for this time of year with the warm sun beaming down, not a cloud in the sky, so I decided to bring some bait to see if I could find a carp or two and get them feeding. As I got to the fishery, I could see there were a few anglers on. As I got to Pit 3, I saw there was someone in a popular swim called the Treeline, which faced a snaggy tree-lined



bank. There was also someone in the Channel swim, which faced a channel between the two islands and another angler in a swim called No Carp Bay.

The first swim I walked into from the car park had a group of savage snags, which filled a small bay to the right. The swim was called the Boaty, as there is a sunken boat at the bottom of the snags tight to the bank. This area looked like a carp's haven to me with an entrance on the left for the carp to enter. I quietly crept round to the snaggy bank and peeked inside. I could actually see the sunken boat underneath a maze of snags, and with it sat eight rather large carp... "Found ya," I said to myself, as I crouched inside. The best part of an hour went by, and a few more carp turned up as I watched them swimming in and out the snag from the left, which was a perfect spot to plant some bait with the added bonus of being a good viewing point. As I had all three of Terry's baits with me, I decided to use them all but place them in separate spots in the area. It would give me a rough idea how the carp would react to them and which one the carp would prefer to feed on.

Right, the bait was in place, and I had a good viewing point. Well you

wouldn't believe what happened next! Within minutes of the bait being in place the carp were on it, as they swam in and out of the snags the carp were dropping down onto the baited spots and feeding instantly. I noticed they seemed very interested in the baited spot to the right – a lot more in fact. Don't get me wrong; the carp were feeding on all the spots, but from what I saw I knew exactly what bait to use, the Tuna and Garlic.

It wasn't until the week after that I was able to fish. It was a Tuesday morning, and I arrived at the fishery at first light. As I drove up the path to Pit 3 I saw that the lake looked quite busy. As always someone was in the Treeline, another in the Channel and two others on the far side in swims called the Double and the Cave. I saw the Boaty was free though, so straight away I went round to the snags to investigate, and sure enough I saw four carp relaxing in the centre – perfect!

Seeing fish so quickly, I decided to set up in the Boaty, feeling really confident, as I knew how active the fish were last week. I cast both rods tight to the snags, one to the left-hand side in the opening and the other to the right at the back of the bay. I used my

ever-faithful pop-up rig on both rods fished over a couple of handfuls of glugged-up crushed boilies... Now all I could do was wait.

The day went pretty fast with no occurrences; I was sitting on my hands on my bedchair trying to convince myself that the carp were still in the snags. I was eager to have a look in the snag, but didn't want to reel in in case I spooked a feeding carp. It got to around 7:00pm, and I decided I'd have a rechuck after eating dinner, as it was getting dark. Out of nowhere the right hand rod ripped round violently as the bobbin cracked up against the blank. I was straight on it, as I spilled my dinner all over the bank. The rod was in battle curve as I locked up to a heavy pressure, which was trying to make its way inside the snags. Holding on as the rod was fully locked round, I could feel the carp touching the branches of the snag.

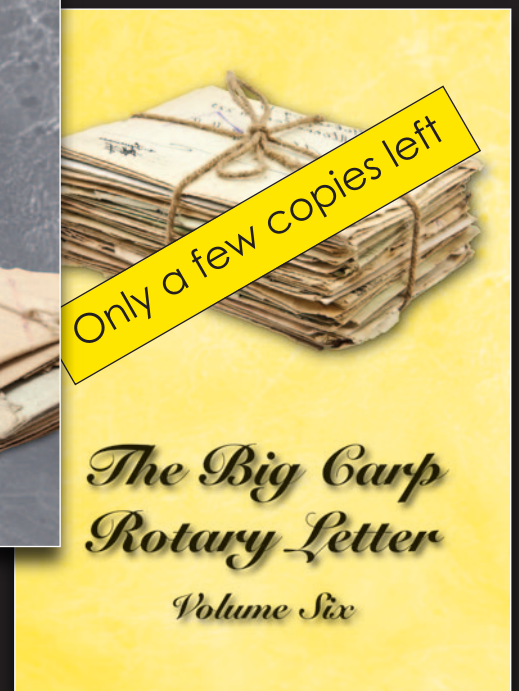
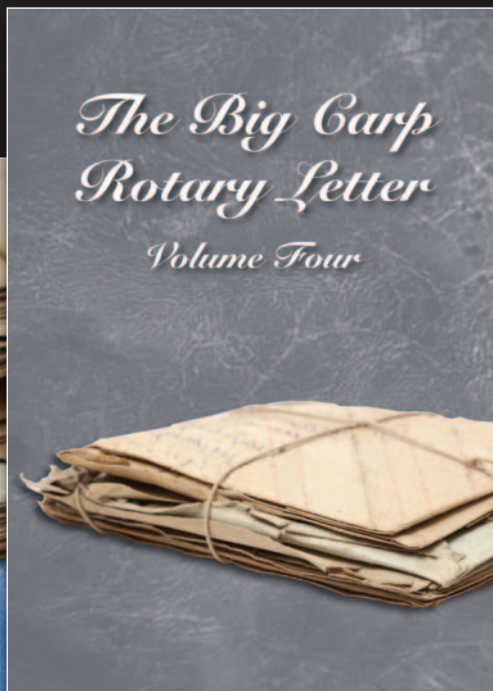
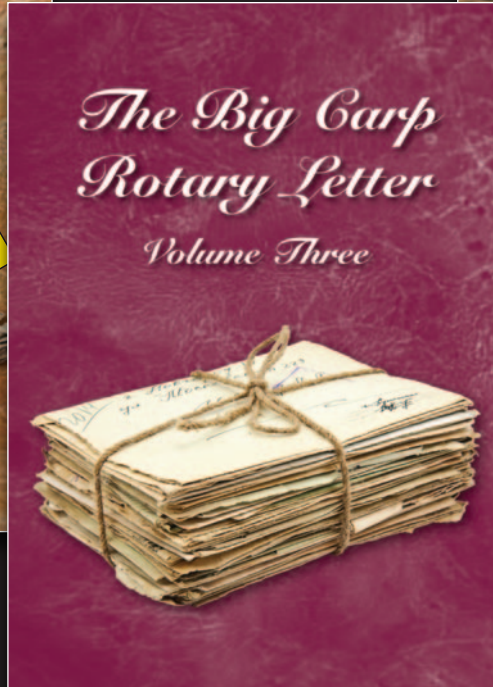
After a couple of powerful rolls, I managed to pull the carp away from the snags and had him in front of me. As it rolled, I thought to myself that it looked a decent fish. A couple more rolls and he was in the net, and a sigh of relief went out. What a fight, I said to myself, as I looked in the net at a rather large but beaten mirror. I



Little black common.

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Un-named common.

recognised the mirror as one of the big stockie mirrors, and on the scales he went 33lb, the first one of the campaign under my belt. I did have a little bit of bad luck though, as my camera lens wouldn't focus trying to do self-takes but managed to get one photo that wasn't blurred.

The rest of the night went without a bleep, but I was still chuffed all the same. I did think to myself maybe hooking that one pushed them out of the snag. The next morning came around before I knew it, and I had to leave pretty early, as I had to be at work for 8am, but before I left I made sure I baited both spots for a return trip in a couple of days. Unfortunately I never managed to get back down that week, and the week after I was jetting off to Rome for a much-needed holiday with the missus. Before I knew it I was travelling back from Rome on the Sunday with the added bonus of having a couple of days off until I had to go back to work on the Wednesday. Feeling fresh and recharged, I was eager to get back to the lake to pick up from where I left

off.

It was Monday morning, and as I arrived at the fisheries, I saw there were a few on. As I parked up and walked round I saw the Boaty was free. Looking in the snags I must have counted over 15 carp all sat in the centre, milling about. Excitedly I ran to the car to get my gear and set up in the Boaty. A good 20 minutes later I was all set up, and the rods were fishing over a bed of the Tuna and Garlic. The spot to the left of the snag started to bubble instantly as I sat cocked, ready to hit a take. 40 minutes passed, and crack! The bobbin hit the blank of the rod with venom. I was in, but surprisingly, it was the right rod. The rod was in full battle curve instantly as I tried to steer an angry carp away, but the carp had other plans as he rolled on the edge of the snags. I slowly pulled him towards me with each pump of the rod. A few hairy moments under the tip, but before I knew it I was looking in the bottom of my net at a long, lean common.

As I laid him on the mat it was clear to see he wasn't happy, as his dorsal

fin was fully flexed, and a sound like a demented frog was being made. I also noticed the carp was passing my bait on the mat, which is always encouraging. The angry common went 24lbs. I slipped him back after a few snaps and got the rod back on the spot with a few handfuls of Tuna and Garlic.

Nothing more occurred that morning, but at around 2pm my left rod screamed into life, but unfortunately I lost the fish to the snag. It's a barbless rule on the complex, so I'm pretty sure the fish knocked the hook out using a branch of the snag, as I was locked up tight to a dead weight. Oh well, you can't win them all. I cast the rod back on the spot, hoping for another chance, but nothing else happened for the rest of the day. Maybe losing one to the snag spooked them out of the area. All I could do was hope as I went into the night.

It was 6:00am the next morning, and the right hand rod wrapped round as I was into battle again. The carp felt heavy but never really put up much of a fight as it stayed low and just held its own. With a little side-

strain, I managed to steer her away from the snags and out in front of me. As she rolled on the surface I saw it was a leather. A few more rolls and she was mine. Peering into the net I saw it was the Match Lake Leather, one of the rarer bank visitors, so I'm told. She pulled the scales round to 30lb 4oz, which would do nicely for a wake-up call. A few snaps of her and she went back to her watery home. The rest of the day went past pretty quickly without any action. It was around 4:00pm, and I reeled in for a wander. I had a quick peek in the Boaty snag, and the carp were still in there, but in smaller numbers.

The next swim along from the snags was called the Car Park swim, which has a set of newly grown pads close to the island on the right. The pads were brought to my attention, as I saw a coot spook off them a couple of times earlier that day. I managed to climb one of the trees that overlooked the pads, and there sat at the back of them, between the pads and the island, were three decent commons. I remember thinking to myself, one of them might be Nina, but couldn't get

a clear enough look. Watching them for a good 30 minutes I headed back to my swim. You could fish the back of the pads perfectly from the Boaty swim, so I opted to put a third rod out over to the back where I saw them. It did however cut across the Car Park swim, but I took a chance, hoping no one would plot up in there.

Nothing occurred going into the night. It was 4:00am the next morning as I awoke to a slow take on the pads rod. From the off, it felt like a decent fish as it held the bottom, and I it powered towards a weedbed in open water. I managed to steer her away and pump her towards me with a bit of luck.

A few hairy moments close in, and I had a rather large common in front of me. As she rolled my legs went to jelly, as my first thought was, "It's her!" I managed to net her first time with ease and pulled the net to me in eagerness to see if it was Nina.

In the net lay her smaller sister, the Star, very similar in looks but around 10lb smaller, but all in all another one to tick off the list and another rare one to boot. On the scales she went bang

on 34lb and my biggest fish from the venue so far. After a few snaps she went back safely, and I was eager to get the rod back out on the spot. I made myself a coffee and sat on my bed chair with the biggest grin on my face.

It started to rain, and the conditions looked perfect. The right rod to the snag ramped off before I knew it, resulting in a long, lean 21lb common. My confidence was sky high at this point. It got to around 10:00am, and the rain moved on. It looked like bite time had clearly passed when out of the blue, I received a violent take on the pad rod. I hit into a heavy pressure as the fish hit the surface, but a few moments later it was off, and as I looked, a decent carp bow-waved away from the spot and around the back of the island into No Carp Bay. I was left feeling gutted, wondering what had happened. I reeled in to what appeared to have been a clean cut on my leader, and my heart sunk deep, as it felt like a good fish! As it was coming to the end of my session, I decided to pack up there and then with my tail between my legs but



The Star.



Match Lake leather, second time.

made sure I baited all three spots with Tuna and Garlic bait.

I was lucky enough to return the week after and get back into the Boaty for two nights. Feeling confident from the week before, I was eager to get the rods back out, although I was unable to get the third rod out to the pads, as someone was in the Car Park swim.

Cutting the story short, I managed to pick up from where I left off, catching another three but losing two to the harsh conditions of the snags. The biggest was a common called No Name, one of the originals, but a carp, which was never named, and on the bank she looked like an old dinosaur. She went 36lb 8oz on the scales, which at this time was the second biggest common in the lake – result! The other two were equally impressive, with one being one of the darkest commons in the lake at 23lb, and the other was a hard-fighting Italian looking mirror which went 27lb 13oz – another rare one to add to the list.

Now with a comfortable amount of



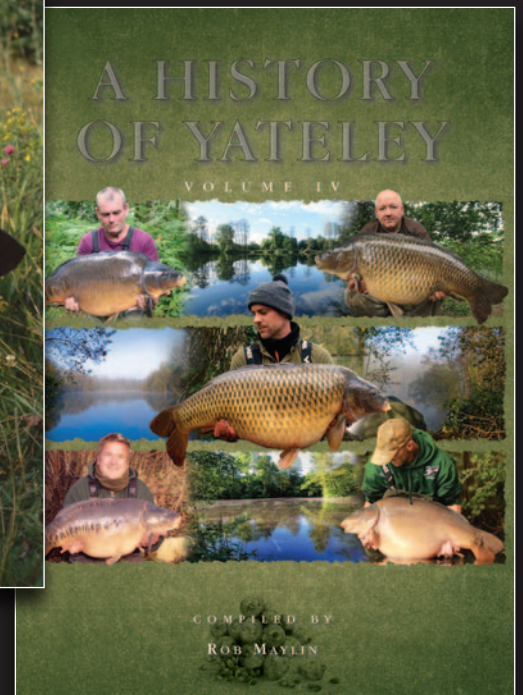
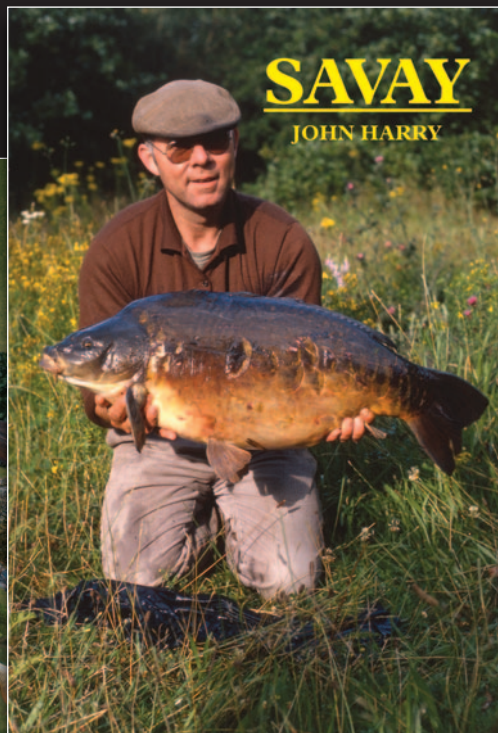
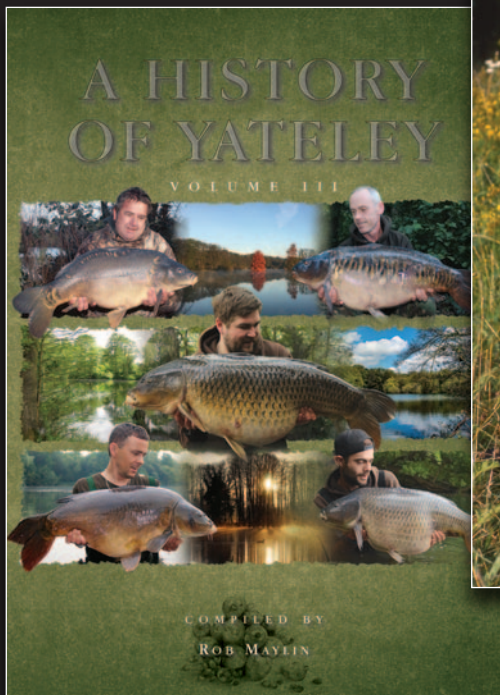
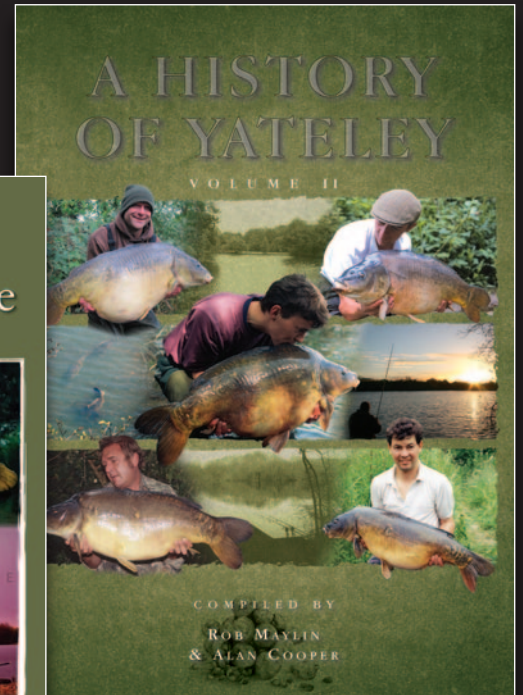
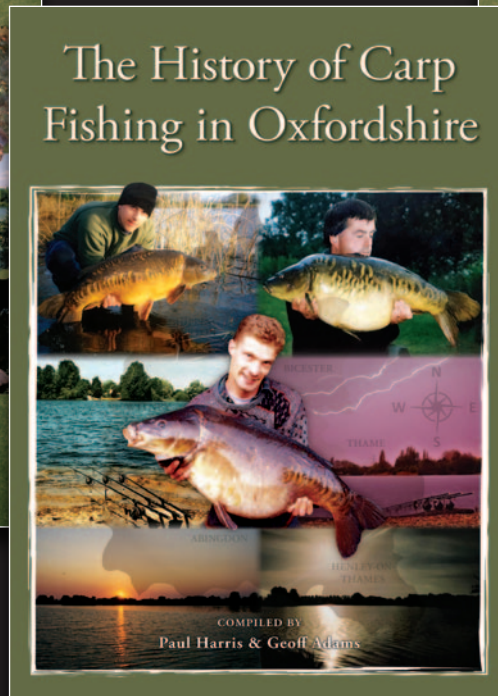
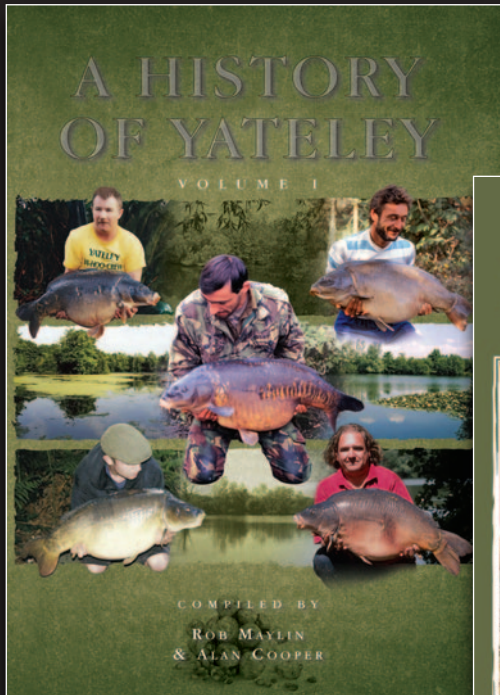
Boaty swim.

the stock under my belt, I felt it was perfect time to try and find the queen of her quarry. Not being sure I'd seen her in the water yet, I was eager to find her and find which areas she favoured. This would prove to be tricky, as her home, known to many,

was the Treeline, but a swim which never seemed to be free, therefore not allowing me to scout the treeline snags for her. Maybe it was just a waiting game, but with that a spanner was thrown into the works.

Until next time, Tight lines. ■

THE HISTORY SERIES



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Itchen Campaigns

By Neil Beesley

Ilived in Southampton from 2007 after moving from the West Midlands when I met my then partner. I wasn't far from a lake and most interestingly the River Itchen, which

runs from past the Swan pub (lovely carvery) up to the private stretch down past Mansbridge winding round the golf course down to the canoe club, which goes out into the brackish waters then out into the sea.

I started to fish the lake first having some out up to 27lb, but I was more and more drawn to the river after hearing of some fish coming out.

I started to plan for the river and started my first session on there, not





far from the canoe club. I started to prebait the night before sessions after work on my way home late at night, a kilo at a time. Now, fishing a public place like the river can be dodgy, but at the time I had my two Staffordshire bull terriers with me all the time, so no problems apart from the odd person waking me up to ask me for a cigarette.

Anyway, I started to catch quickly, resulting in some smaller fish around the 10lb mark, all in very good condition. I didn't stay in same places; I moved around a lot. I was using lots of bait – kilo bags of corn from supermarkets and big sacks of Vitalin as groundbait, as it was much cheaper to use.

Also I was glugging my baits in liquid krill, and the longer glugged the more I felt this was what was giving me all these chances. At times I used a small spod to get the corn out on the slower bends and still had quite a few runs.

Another thing I did notice was that there were a few repeat captures, as the stretch was only a mile or so long. Some of the fish were crackers –



nothing big, but all were caught on heavily glugged baits. Another nice surprise was when I had a powerful

run one afternoon and ended up with a 22lb pike on a boilie, which was hooked fairly in the jaws.

I caught on most sessions. I hardly blanked on the river, and I was doing a week at a time on some of my sessions. I was also was catching throughout the year, the highlight being a 15lb mirror in its winter colours in January when it was minus five.

I did work out I had around 30 fish and lost around ten to 15 over the two-and-a-half years on there. My rigs were a simple hair rig with hook lengths of around 6 to 10ins depending on where I was fishing.

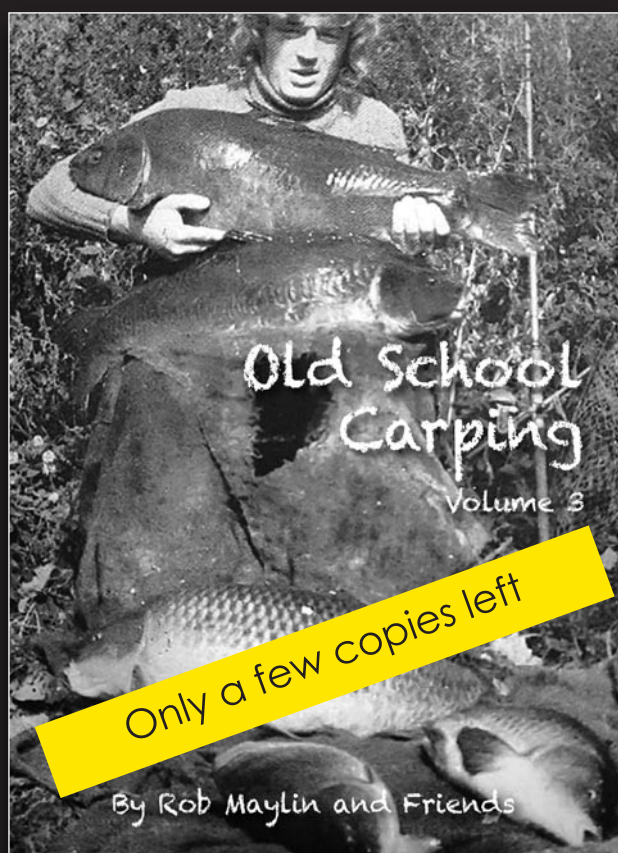
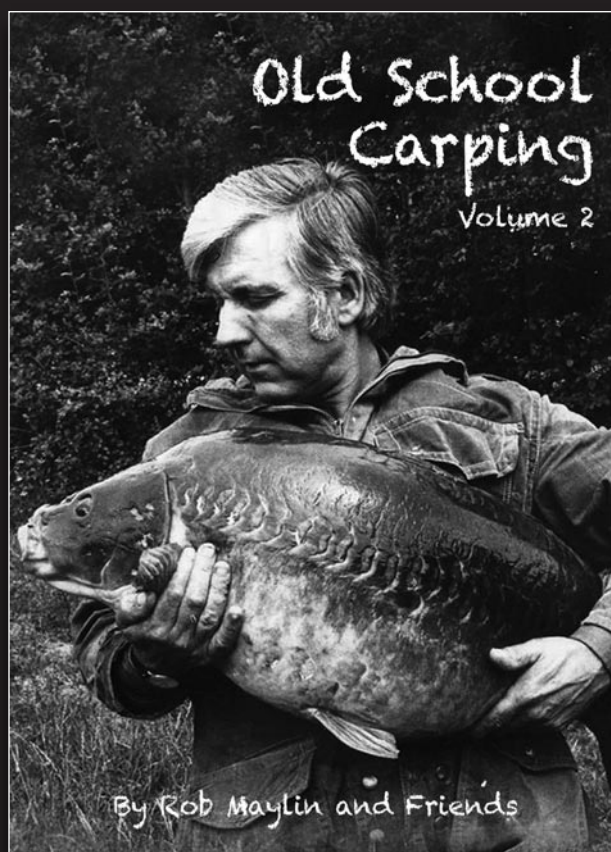
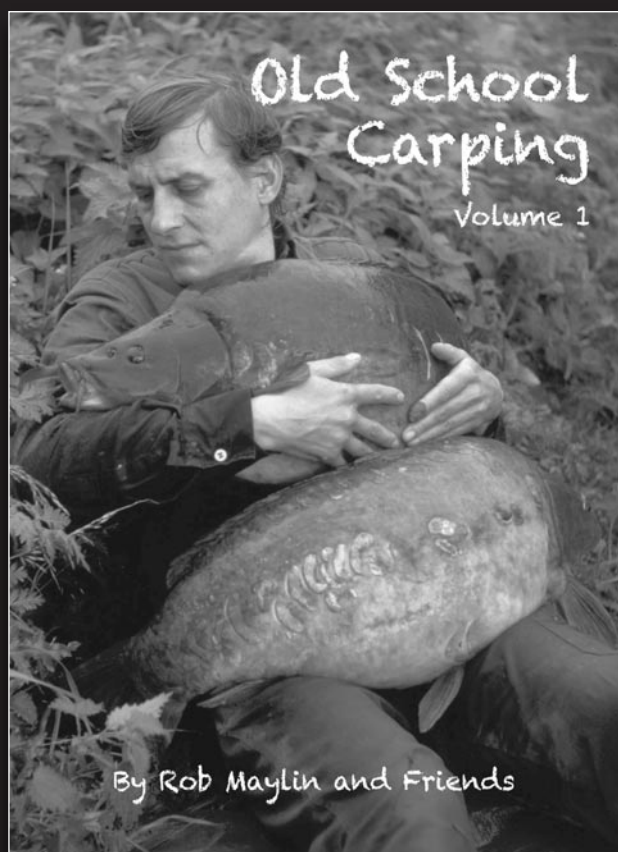
The longer hook lengths were for the bend of the river, as it was silty, and I thought the lead might pull a shorter rig into the silt. This was finished off with a gripper lead around the 3 or 4oz mark with the rods pointed high in the air on a Cygnet Sniper pod to keep as much line out of water due to the rubbish coming downriver.

My advice is to give the rivers a chance whatever time of year; you never know what will be on the end of the line. Use loads of bait too, as some will get washed away. I wish I could do it all over again, as my river fishing ended in 2013, and I've now moved back to the West Midlands where I will be after a canal 30. ■



27lb, originally from the River Itchen in Southampton until someone put it in Mansbridge Reservoir just off the River Itchen where I caught it. Someone else then caught it and it was put back in its original home.

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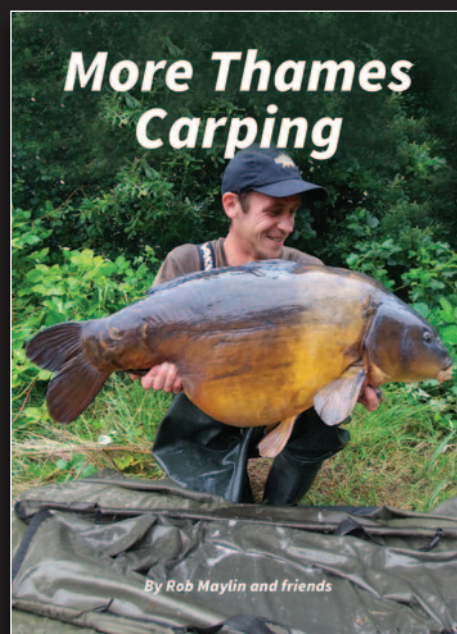
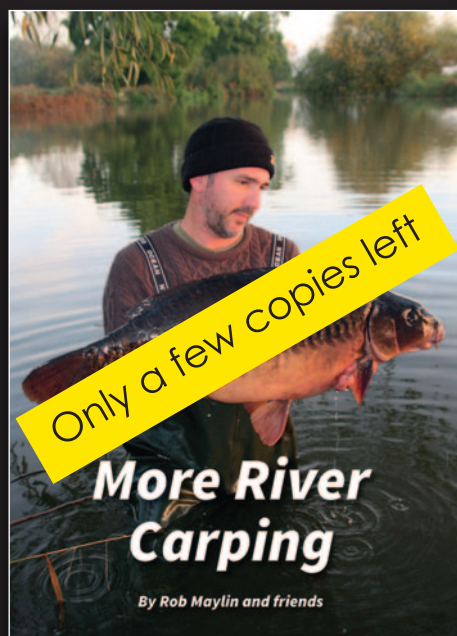
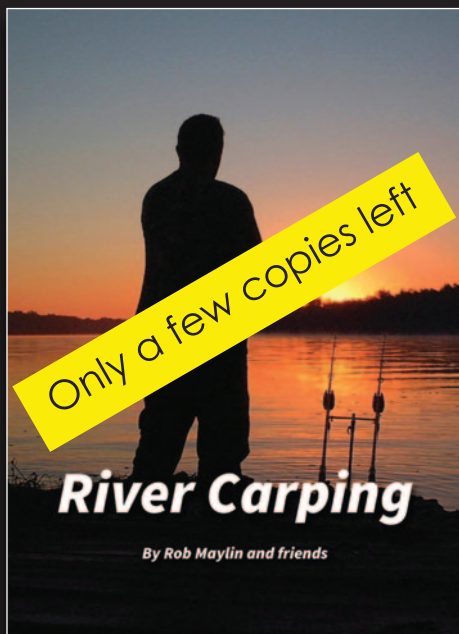
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